THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

CHARLES REID BUCHANAN

Elizabeth Starr. Easter 1925

To a dear friend whose love
and thoughtfulness have meant
much of joy during the years—

Edith.

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

BY

ISABELLA REID BUCHANAN

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Dedicated to

Bible Students in Clubs and Classes

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This collection of character sketches of Women of the Bible is compiled from lectures and lessons given in Women's Study Clubs and Bible Classes.

The work has been done in appreciation of those women whose interest and enthusiasm have been my inspiration. The sketches are purposely brief as they are intended to be suggestive and to stimulate further study.

Quotations from the Bible are abbreviated, and chapter and verse references are omitted, as it is assumed that the Bible itself will be used in connection with each study.

Bible books and historical periods should be studied as a whole. A Bible Dictionary will give exact references. For some periods having little or no record of women characters paragraphs have been inserted to sustain the continuity of the historical background.

Minor characters have been introduced as throwing some light on the progress of womanhood through Bible times. A few characters from the Apocrypha have been included, some especially because they have been so frequently represented in Sacred Music and Art.

I. R. B.

Minneapolis, Minn.
March 1924.

TESTIMONIALS

April 24th, 1924.

General Federation of Women's Clubs,
Office of the President, Mrs. Thomas G. Winter,
2617 Dean Boulevard,
Minneapolis, Minn.

Genius is more than hard work. It involves love and ideals. All three characteristics have been combined in Mrs. John Buchanan's study and teaching of the Bible from the literary point of view. At home she has gathered hundreds of women and set them aflame with a realization of the beauty and the power and the relation to their own lives of the great Book, and, inevitably, they and other women who heard of her work, wished to spread the inspiration over a wider field. That is why the General Federation of Women's Clubs asked Mrs. Buchanan to act as its Chairman of the Bible as Literature.

That is why, now, some of her methods and ideas are finding their way into print. I do not know any better or more far-reaching service to America at present than to make myriads of women feel the Bible as a living force.

Alice Ames Winter.

Minneapolis, Minn.,
June 3, 1924.

I am in hearty sympathy with such a book as this of Mrs. Buchanan's, in which she marshalls in an impressive row the women characters of the Bible. It is a magnificent subject, for womanhood as shown in the Old and New Testament, runs the whole possible gamut of the sex, and this collection of human beings who have lived, suffered, sinned, and wrought nobly in their place and time, becomes a symbol for the saga of the sex on this planet, from the beginning until the present moment. Mrs. Buchanan has handled her great theme, as fascinating as it is important, with

the diligent research of the Bible scholar, and the human sympathy of the lover of her kind. The result should make a wide appeal, and take its place among the valued helps to Bible study.

RICHARD BURTON,
Author, Lecturer, and Professor of Literature,
University of Minnesota.

Mrs. John C. Buchanan through her lectures and Bible classes has, in a most unique way, made the women of the Bible live. The Bible women whom we love have become intimate friends, while the others stand out as warnings.

We are grateful to Mrs. Buchanan for consenting to publish this source of inspiration for women throughout the land, confident that it will stimulate a more diligent and enthusiastic study of the "Book of Books" and give a new vision of the mission of womanhood in that

"Far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

Publication Committee of the Buchanan Bible Study Club,
Mrs. Harry W. Rice, Chairman,
Mrs. C. A. Buckman,
Mrs. J. Chester Armstrong,
Mrs. Geo. W. Bestor,
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Part—One

WOMEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

Of the one hundred and fifty or more women whose names are mentioned in the Bible there are many of whom we can form definite ideas. As their records are brief one must read between the lines to form mental pictures of their lives and to realize their achievements.

They can best be studied in groups chronologically arranged, with attention given to the character of each period.

Some one has compared the book of Genesis to a collection of gems strung on a chain of genealogies, seeming to show the physical connection, while emphasizing the spiritual separation, of the Israelites and their neighbors.

Introductory Group

EVE, ADAH, ZILLAH, AND THE WIFE OF SETH

The advance in stages of civilization may be traced in the second and fourth chapters of Genesis.

Eve, as the Mother of Mankind, has been overcharged with responsibility for human troubles. But, we read that, The seed of the woman is to crush the head of the serpent. This is called the germ of the covenant, which is a recognition of the relationship between God and man, and foretells the triumph of good over evil.

Cain going out from the presence of the Lord represents the cave man and in his genealogy we have a foreshortened glimpse of the stone age, the metal age, the age of agriculture, and the rise of poetry, music, and religion.

Adah and Zillah were wives of Lamech, a primitive poet, whose short poem called, "The Song of the Sword," exults in a newly discovered weapon for slaying. They were also mothers of famous sons, Adah was the mother of Jabel,

first of such as dwell in tents and have cattle, and of Jubal, first patron of music and the inventor of the harp and the pipe. Zillah was the mother of Tubal, a forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron. They were also the first on whom Lamech tested his poetry as he summoned them to hear his voice and harken unto his speech.

Following the mention of Seth, son of Adam and Eve, we read, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." Among the pictures in the Congressional Library is a series on the essentials of a well-ordered life: Religion, Labor, Study, Recreation.

The first, Religion, shows a primitive man and woman, who may typify Seth and his wife, kneeling before a rude stone altar under the open sky. The smoke of their offering as it ascends heavenward expresses their idea of giving back to God a portion of the gifts His hand has bestowed upon them. Thus we group with Eve these three women among her early descendants as helping in the development of the covenant, expressing a recognition of God and a hope of the triumph of good.

PERIOD I.—PATRIARCHAL AGE

PIONEERS AND FOUNDERS—FAMILY LIFE—GENESIS

Among the wives of the Patriarchs we select for our first study Sarah, Mother of the Faithful; Milcah, Mother of the Haran Colony; and Hagar, Mother of the Ishmaelites, claimed as ancestress by Mohammedans with pride in their descent from Abraham. They all endured the hardships of pioneering.

The places which we should study as associated with them are: Ur in Chaldea, near the Persian Gulf; Haran on the upper waters of the Euphrates; Hebron, and other ancient places in Canaan; and Egypt, and Mecca in the Wilderness of Arabia.

Archeological excavations have recently brought to light ancient temples, images, and forms of worship of the Sun God in Ur, and the unchanging Orient furnishes examples of primitive caravans and methods of traveling, which help to visualize the journeys of these matriarchs.

SARAH AND MILCAH

Sarah and Milcah were sisters-in-law, who were destined to be founders of a great people and to endure the hardships of pioneers in lands far distant from their home. They were little girls together in Ur of Chaldea where they could watch the great river Euphrates flowing southward to the sea.

Abraham had two brothers, Nahor and Haran. Sarah was married to her half-brother, Abraham. Milcah and Lot were children of Haran, on whose death they were probably left motherless also; as Abraham assumed the care of Lot. Milcah was married to her uncle Nahor.

This marriage probably took place when she was but little more than a child as was the oriental custom. It would be nothing unusual for a very young girl to be married to an uncle older than her father.

The family having determined to go pioneering we can imagine the very young women on their wedding journey. As they had often wondered where the waters of the Euphrates came from, they were now to journey over five hundred miles toward the head waters of the river. They did not go in an aeroplane, nor an automobile, nor railroad coach, nor carriage. They rode uncomfortably, secluded behind veils and curtains, in a cramped position with little to do but look at one another until at camping places they could alight to prepare food for their party, of at least four men, Terah, father of Abraham, being the Patriarch; Lot, Milcah's brother, being with them.

A recent picture of women riding in Persia shows two women crouched in what a writer calls "two exaggerated hen coops" (probably not referring to the occupants) slung one on each side of a small ass. They appear to be resigned to their discomforts, as if nothing different were to be expected. Sarah and Milcah may have been fortunate enough to be able to ride together on the back of a camel in a box, shaped like a clothes basket, with a canopy concealing them and shutting off their view of the scenery.

They settled at a place about five hundred miles from Ur, which place they named "Haran" in honor of the brother who had died in Chaldea. As he was Milcah's father, it may have been in part her loving remembrance of him which determined the naming of the place.

Milcah probably never left this home. Her story is concluded with a genealogy of her family. Eight sons are listed, no mention being made of daughters, they probably

being considered unimportant. Milcah's eighth son became the father of Laban and Rebekah; the former in his turn became the father of Leah and of Rachel.

One wonders about the hard conditions of living without conveniences, about carrying the water, grinding grain into meal, baking without an oven and producing clothing for the family. These, and many more, were the tasks of women. One wonders if Milcah ever overcame her longing for her friend Sarah after the latter had been taken to Egypt by Abraham, and whether she were still living to weep over the story of the death and burial of Sarah when Abraham's servant came for Rebekah to be the bride of Isaac, Sarah's only child. Milcah in the simple conditions of her life was truly fulfilling her destiny as the ancestress of a great number of famous people and a carrier of great ideas about the one true God, Jehovah.

Sarah's journey was but half finished at Haran, for with Abraham and Lot she soon journeyed on for another five hundred miles. She was indeed a very experienced traveler after she had seen Egypt and returned with an Egyptian maid to Hebron. Her married life was clouded by the lack of children, as not to be the mother of a son was a great humiliation to an oriental woman.

We are interested in imagining the home life of Sarah and Hagar, and Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, crowded together in tents. We read of the mocking boy, of the envious mothers and of the banishment of Hagar and her son. After Sarah's prayers were answered by the birth of Isaac we can only imagine the suffering of her mother heart when Abraham prepared to offer him as a human sacrifice, and her unspeakable joy when he was restored to her unharmed.

The story of the burial of Sarah shows the oriental bargaining for the famous family sepulcher at Hebron, which

contains, until this day, the mortal remains of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives, Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah. This tomb has been so jealously guarded by the Mohammedans that none but their own people, and few of them, have been allowed to see its crypts.

Here in Hebron Abraham experienced the universal human sorrow of the loss of his faithful wife. Here he came with her son Isaac to weep and to mourn for her. She had accomplished her mission as mother of Isaac, a son of promise and a lover of peace.

HAGAR

Hagar's story, like that of Milcah, is interwoven with that of Sarah. Egypt was her early homeland. The Tigris-Euphrates valleys and the Nile valley were the two cradles of civilization; so that when Abraham and Sarah arrived in Egypt they had traversed the known world of their day. If we could be transported to that place and time we could look upon the same almost sacred river. Egypt was called the gift of the Nile as prosperity depended upon its overflow. We could look upon the pyramid Cheops covering thirteen acres of ground and upon great numbers of temples to various gods representing the sun and other powers of Nature, and on shrines to many sacred animals. We could see the honors and powers bestowed upon the priesthood, and try to realize what were the ideals of Hagar's childhood.

As the caste system prevailed, we wonder about Hagar's life at home and abroad. She would probably belong to a low caste, as she was taken away to Canaan to be the servant of Sarah and concubine of Abraham, becoming the mother of his son Ishmael, of whom it was said "also of the son of the bondwoman" God would make a great nation.

After Sarah's envy had caused Abraham reluctantly to drive away Hagar and her son, they wandered southward into the wilderness.

Traditions about Hagar are held tenaciously by Mohammedans who claim descent from Ishmael. They center about Mecca and the holy well Zem-Zem in the sacred area surrounding the Kaaba, or holy building, the corner stone of which is said to contain the original Koran.

Sir Richard Burton of England has told minutely of penetrating, disguised as a Moslem and at hazard of his life, into the sacred area and of witnessing the ceremonies of a pilgrimage to Mecca. These seem meaningless and foolish, lacking any idea of inspiration. They seem to become tests of physical endurance, full of danger from lack of sanitation, but a source of life-long pride, the returned Pilgrim being too honorable to do any useful work.

Among the religions of the World, Mohammedanism and Christianity are classed as developments of Judaism. If the millions of followers of Mohammed could add to their loyalty and zeal for one God, hatred of idolatry, and faithfulness in prayer, the distinguishing ideals of Christianity, Hagar's descendants uniting with Isaac's, that would be a fitting consummation of the scene at the family sepulcher described in Genesis, when Abraham was laid to rest by his sons Isaac and Ishmael.

Rebekah—Leah—Rachel

Our second study of the Women of the Patriarchal Age will include Rebekah, mother of twin sons, who became heads of two great nations; Leah, mother of six tribal heads; and Rachel, "the Beloved," mother of Joseph and Benjamin.

As in the previous period, their lives present hard conditions of polygamous life, where the oldest male member, called the Patriarch, was the representative of the family in social contacts, where wifehood and motherhood were the chief concerns of women, but where respect and consideration were shown to the matriarchs of the family.

REBEKAH

To become acquainted with Rebekah, we must return in imagination to the Haran colony, where we left Milcah with her large family of at least eight sons, and no one knows how many daughters. We hope she lived long enough to rejoice over the birth of the baby whom her son Bethuel named Rebekah, and to hear the bright little girl call her "Grandma." We also hope that she was living when a messenger came with news of Abraham and Sarah. How her heart would lovingly recall the days of their childhood together.

The wooing of Rebekah is a fascinating love story. We read that it was after the death of Sarah that Abraham equipped his servant with quite a train of camels with costly trappings, bearing rich gifts and many evidences of prosperity. The servant was charged to go to the land of Abraham's kindred to seek a wife for his son Isaac.

There were hundreds of miles to be traversed. While the swift surefooted camels pursued their tireless way, we like to share the anxiety of the messenger in the first recorded prayer in the Bible as he prayed for guidance that he might be led to choose the right mate for his dear young master.

Tissot's painting of "Rebekah at the Well" shows her as fair to look upon, and her cordial greeting and service for the stranger show her to be alert in mind and quick in action.

Her father and her brother Laban, as heads of the family, extended cordial hospitality, revealing the conditions of life where there were no inns for travelers. We can note the significance of the Arab proverb: "When I take my friend into my tent I give him of my meat, and of my home, of my thoughts, and of my life."

Truly the messenger asks to take away a dear part of their lives when he presents rich gifts with his proposal for Rebekah to become the wife of Isaac. The maiden accepts, but the mother, like all mothers since, asks for time for bridal preparations.

Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, who was an esteemed member of the family, went with her mistress, whom she probably outlived. Her grave at Bethel, marked by the "Oak of Weeping" was revered by Jacob and his children.

When all formalities have been arranged, the long journey follows with what unrecorded thoughts and words absorbing the minds of Rebekah and her nurse, until the caravan approaches the home where "Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide" and beheld the approach of his bride. It was thus that they exchanged their first trembling words of greeting after which Rebekah was given the honors of her new position.

The alertness of Rebekah's girlhood character developed into shrewdness in her home life after her twin sons, Jacob and Esau, were old enough to arouse rivalry and favoritism.

Esau became a man who lived in his physical being and found full satisfaction in material things. Lacking spiritual appreciation he was a great contrast to his brother Jacob, who wanted to be the temporal and spiritual head of his family. Esau became the head of the Edomites, although his lack of high ideals limited his honors. His nation has a long history in connection with that of his brother's descendants.

Rebekah, in scheming with her son Jacob to defraud his brother of his birthright and to deceive his dear, patient father, brought sorrow upon herself. The enmity of Esau caused Jacob to take flight from threats against his life and to find refuge with his mother's brother at Haran. He was sent to seek a wife of his own kindred. Rebekah, the first complaining mother-in-law, asked, "What good shall my life do me?" if Jacob's choice should be like Esau's "a grief of mind" to his parents.

Jacob left his father supposedly on his deathbed, but strangely enough Rebekah seems to be the one who passed away without again seeing her favorite son. Isaac with his gentle disposition would surely forgive her and tenderly care for her, as he survived to welcome Jacob and his family after many years.

When Isaac's lifework was ended, this man who hated strife and was such a lover of peace that he could love and live happily with Rebekah, was buried in the family sepulcher by his sons Jacob and Esau. In Jacob many of Rebekah's traits are reproduced. His spirit and ambition became noble when directed into paths of righteousness.

LEAH AND RACHEL

The stories of Leah and Rachel are so closely related that they are best studied together. Rebekah was their aunt, and when she desired to find a place of refuge for her son Jacob from the threats of his brother Esau she sent him to her brother Laban, now apparently the head of the Haran colony.

Jacob loved his cousin Rachel, but oriental custom required the marriage of the elder before the younger daughter. Both sisters became wives of Jacob and, naturally, rivals with jealous ambitions for their sons, of whom Leah had six. The two to be most noted on account

of the prominence of their descendants are Levi, ancestor of the Levites, and Judah, a national hero. Jacob also had four other sons whose mothers were concubines before Rachel had the long deferred joy of embracing her first son, Joseph. He was still her only son when Laban and Jacob severed business interests, and the latter with all his family and possessions journeyed back to the land of Canaan.

The large caravan must have been an evidence of prosperity. It aroused Laban's fears lest he had been defrauded in the settlement. From his pursuit of Jacob and demands upon him, threatening strife, came a peaceful agreement attested by a cairn of stones at a place called Mizpah, marking the boundary of separation between them. This is the origin of the famous benediction "The Lord watch between me and thee, while we are absent one from another." Originally an evidence of fear and ill-will, it has become an expression of loving solicitude.

The caravan was much disturbed and thrown into confusion by an advance of armed men coming as messengers from Esau. Jacob in fear of his brother's wrath, prepared for the defense of his party. A circle of wagons and pack animals formed the outer guard of the more valuable animals and treasures assembled within the circle.

It is interesting to note the placing of the concubines and their sons as being less precious than Leah and her six sons, and the special care of Rachel and her one son Joseph, they being given the most secure place. So also they were presented when the easy-going Esau had convinced Jacob that he held no grudge for former wrongs. They met and parted on friendly terms.

Their progress was the slow pace of nomads with flocks and herds making homes of the various stopping places where pasturage and water were to be found. In one of

these camps Rachel's second son Benjamin was born and left motherless, as Rachel died. This was a heart-breaking sorrow to Jacob and all the wives and children seemed to be tender toward the helpless baby, notwithstanding the fact that Leah's sons hated their half-brother, Joseph. It is the bond of full brotherhood between Joseph and Benjamin that makes their story so touching.

Near the entrance to Bethlehem there exists till this day the reputed tomb of Rachel, where Jacob raised a cairn of stones. A recent item of world news told of fighting between sects of Jews and Mohammedans to determine which was privileged to make the restoration of Rachel's tomb.

Throughout Jacob's life his utmost endeavor was to enlarge the house of Rachel, and to favor her sons. On his death bed he recalled his great sorrow and loss in the death of his best beloved "who died by me in the way." His dying blessing foretold "Joseph shall be a fruitful vine by a fountain, whose branches run over the wall" extending blessings to outsiders. The vine became a national emblem.

Leah outlived her sister and had many sad experiences. A settlement was made at Shechem, where Jacob bought a parcel of ground. Undoubtedly he and his sons at this time dug the famous well where, more than two thousand years later, Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman. On his death bed Jacob willed this land to Joseph, whose bones were subsequently carried through long journeyings and interred not far from the well.

Leah probably experienced the grief of Jacob when her sons sold their half-brother Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Her daughter Dinah became the victim of lustful men, in whose punishment Leah's sons involved the family in such broils that their peace was gone and they left their home for further wanderings.

Whether Leah lived to endure the famine we do not know. She is not mentioned as going into Egypt when the family went there, but we are told that she was buried beside Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah in the famous family sepulcher, and that Jacob was accorded a notable funeral, his embalmed body being brought from Egypt with great lamentations, and interred beside hers.

Six great tribes of Israel mark Leah's contribution to the history of the Chosen People. Zilpah and Bilhah, maids of Leah and of Rachel, were the mothers of four tribes.

ASENATH

Of the four Egyptian women who figure in Bible history Asenath, wife of Joseph, is least known. Hagar, the concubine of Abraham, is known as the mother of Ishmael; Potiphar's wife, the temptress of Joseph, has become a type of sensuality and of malicious falsehood for all time; Pharaoh's daughter, the benevolent, foster-mother of Moses, comes much later into Bible history. Asenath belongs with the last of the Patriarchs.

Asenath was the daughter of Poti-phera priest of On, (Heliopolis). To realize her childhood and formative influences we study the system of Egyptian worship. We read of the prevalent worship of the sun and of sacred animals, and of the great power and honor given to the priesthood. On was the center of sun worship. Sacred cats were also worshipped there.

The ancient glories of Heliopolis included a great temple to the sun with obelisks, one of which remains there; two, known as "Cleopatra's Needles" have been removed, one to London and one to New York City. There was also a famous seat of learning, the priests of which were greatly honored. Moses undoubtedly received his knowledge of all the learning of the Egyptians at this institution.

Its later history, in rivalry with Alexandria on the opposite side of the Nile delta, is interesting, but far removed from the time of Asenath.

Among the honors conferred by Pharaoh upon Joseph, such as his signet ring and almost unlimited power, was the hand of Asenath in marriage. There is a Jewish and Christian tradition that she renounced her false gods and accepted Jehovah worship, to become the wife of Joseph. Certainly the wedding ceremonies would be notably elaborate.

Asenath became the mother of Manasseh and Ephraim. We would like to know but have no record of her first meeting with her father-in-law Jacob and with her husband's full brother Benjamin and the rest of the family.

Jacob, desiring to enlarge the house of Rachel, his best loved wife, adopted the two sons of Joseph and Asenath as his own. In token of this adoption he kissed and embraced them and gave them his patriarchal blessing. He purposely gave the greater honor to Ephraim who was the younger, but predicted a great future for Manasseh also.

The heart of Asenath their mother must have treasured Jacob's dying prayer that the God before whom his fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which had fed him all his lifelong until that day, the angel which had redeemed him from all evil, should bless the lads; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Gideon and Jephthah and his daughter were descendants of Manasseh. Joshua, Deborah, Hannah, and Samuel, descending from Ephraim, all reflected honor upon their ancestress, Asenath.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Other women of this period are the wife and daughters of Lot; Keturah, a wife of Abraham; Tamar, a concubine of Judah; Potiphar's wife, "the Temptress of Egypt."

With the exception of Potiphar's wife, these women are all in the line of ancestry of kindred nations. Absorbed in the routine of daily tasks they little realized that their lives as Pioneers and Founders were making a great contribution toward human progress in the knowledge of a God who cares about the children of men.

PERIOD II.—AGE OF HEROISM; TRIBAL LIFE

Exodus—1 Sam.

The account of the Patriarchal age given in Genesis closes with the return of the children of Israel to Egypt after their father's funeral at Hebron in Canaan.

A period of more than 400 years intervenes before the Biblical account in Exodus resumes the narrative. From secular history we learn of the rule of the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings who invaded Egypt from the deserts of Southwestern Asia and drove the native Egyptians from their cities and homes around the Nile delta. Many miles up the river valley they established a new capital at Thebes and across the river, an elaborate priestly service at the temples of Luxor and Karnac, whose architectural remains have been the wonder and admiration of succeeding generations.

The Shepherd Kings were friendly to the tribes of Israel, as they also were herdsmen, but were succeeded by the Pharaohs of the 18th dynasty who became strong enough to drive out the Hyksos and to return to their rightful domain near the Nile delta. Their age was known as "The Grand Age." Their leader was the one of whom it was said, "There arose a King who knew not Joseph." Building enterprises flourished; the pyramids remain to show some of the wonderful structures built at this time, by the labor of slaves, especially by that of the Hebrews.

Rameses II is known as the Pharaoh of the oppression and Meneptah I as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Of the Hebrew women we shall first study Jochebed, the mother of Miriam, Aaron, and Moses; Pharaoh's daughter, called "The Benevolent"; Miriam, the sister of Aaron, and Moses; and Zipporah, the wife of Moses.

JOCHEBED—PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER

Exodus

The great honor of being the mother of three distinguished children belongs to Jochebed, wife of Amram, of the tribe of Levi.

The edict of Pharaoh which condemned to death every new-born male child of the Hebrews came as a crushing weight upon the mother of Miriam and Aaron, who after months of anxiety found that her new-born babe was another son. How to save his life by concealing his existence from every watchful eye or ear, must have caused an unceasing vigil by day and by night resulting in a strained weariness of body and soul.

When she could no longer conceal the child she made an ark of rushes and laid the sleeping baby in it and hid it by the river's brink, with what bitter tears and anguish of spirit any mother can realize. The baby's sister, Miriam, left to watch, soon saw the arrival of Pharaoh's daughter with attendants coming to bathe in the river. The story of her tender-hearted pity for the crying baby and how she named him Moses and became his foster-mother are too well known to need repetition here. Miriam, when allowed to seek a nurse for the baby, secured its own mother, Jochebed.

We are left to infer the character of these two women from the study of the noble characteristics of the man Moses. His mother doubtless instilled into his young mind and heart a pride in his Hebrew ancestry and a devotion to the principles of God's chosen people. From his foster-mother and her nation he received all the worldly wisdom of his time. We are not told how they were affected by his rash murder of an Egyptian task master which caused his flight nor whether they ever met again when he returned to become the liberator of his oppressed brethren.

We see that his mother and his foster-mother were permitted to be handmaidens of the Lord and were fulfilling a worthy destiny in training Moses whose sterling character and gifts of leadership were the salvation of his people and whose counsels have guided and inspired humanity in its upward progress.

ZIPPORAH

Exodus

Zipporah, the wife of Moses, was one of seven daughters of Jethro, a priest of Midian. When Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, he came and dwelt in the land of this desert sheik.

As he sat disconsolate by a well, the seven daughters of Jethro came to draw water and to fill the troughs to water their father's flock. When shepherds came and drove them away, Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. Their father extended the hospitality of the desert tent to Moses, and he became the husband of Zipporah and a member of Jethro's family. They had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

The ensuing time spent by Moses in the mountainous desert was uneventful in the outward circumstances of tending flocks in solitary places, but full of significance as affording communion with God and many soul struggles before Moses decided to accept God's call to become the champion of an oppressed people and their Liberator from slavery. What the influence of Zipporah may have been we are not told, but when all was ready for Moses to set forth on his great enterprise he was accompanied part way by his wife and two sons. Then they returned with Jethro to his home.

Moses returning to Egypt would be in great danger, but we are not told of the anxiety of Zipporah and her family.

Only when Moses and Aaron having successfully accomplished their mission are seen returning, are we given a picture of the family reunion. The wife and children are only mentioned, but Jethro is shown taking Moses again into his tent with joy and great eagerness to hear of all that the Lord had done for his people and saying, "Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all Gods." Jethro offered a burnt sacrifice to God and called Aaron and all the elders of Israel to eat bread with him before God.

We would like to enter into the joy of Zipporah on this great occassion. It was truly a Thanksgiving dinner which she eagerly began to prepare, with joy in her heart in the reunion with her husband. It would not be strange if she had been taunted as a deserted wife by cruel gossips, but now her patience is rewarded. Moses has returned, not only unharmed, but crowned with glory and honor.

The little boys too would show a shy but thrilling interest in this strange man talking so earnestly with their grandfather and their Uncle Hobab. They were too young to remember ever having seen him before, and now they are told that he is their father.

Moses, as the center of interest in this domestic scene, presents an unusual phase of his character, full of human interest. We have no further record of Zipporah but we honor her as the wife of one of the greatest leaders of all time.

MIRIAM

Exodus—Numbers

Although all the accounts of the women of Israel leave much of their story untold, we have a more extended account of Miriam than of many of the others.

The story of her watchful care over her baby brother Moses by the river and her capable way of securing his own mother to be his nurse has already been told in the

study of Pharaoh's daughter. We get an impression of her then as a bright ambitious little girl and thus she seems to have developed.

We have records of three other incidents in her life. We hope and believe that Moses must have returned to the home of his father and mother in Egypt as Miriam at least seems to have been one of those who made the remarkable escape from the pursuing hosts of the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

We notice a great change in the position of women when the people celebrate their escape and the overthrow of their enemies in their great song of triumph recorded in Exodus 15. We are told that Miriam and all the women went out with timbrels and with dances singing a refrain, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." "This is my God and I will praise him; my father's God and I will exalt him."

We would like to think always of Miriam, "The Prophetess" (as she was called at this time), as using her undoubted talents to stimulate a spirit of unity and national feeling among the tribes and thankfulness to God for their deliverance.

What part she took during the wilderness wanderings when Moses was so sorely tried by the murmurings and rebellions of the people and the priests, we are not told. One of the hardest experiences of his life must have been the rebellion of Miriam and Aaron against his authority. They said, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only with Moses? Hath he not spoken also with us?". They were summoned before the Lord who said, "My servant Moses is faithful in all mine house: wherefore were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?" And Miriam became leprous, as white as snow, and Aaron said unto Moses,

"O my Lord, lay not, I pray thee, this sin upon us, for that we have done foolishly, and for that we have sinned."

And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, "Heal her, O God, I beseech thee." She was shut up outside the camp for seven days after which she was restored and reinstated. This incident shows that even great talent, services, and opportunity were no insurance against pride, conceit, and jealousy. It also furnishes another proof of the magnanimity of Moses.

These Nomad tribes were long delayed at Kadesh on the southern boundary of Canaan after, in wilful rebellion, they refused to go in and possess the land. We are told briefly, "Miriam died there and was buried there." We are sure that notwithstanding her faults and failings the trend of her life was helpful to her people. We are sure that Moses truly loved her and so her very sin was a means of developing him in his character as a mediator between his people and their God.

We seem to hear him comforting and sustaining her in his well known assurance of God's faithfulness. "He will not fail thee nor forsake thee." "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms."

RAHAB

Joshua

The death of Miriam occurred near the close of the Wilderness Wanderings. There followed a long interval of time with little mention of women during which the farewell and death of Moses were succeeded by the Conquest of Canaan under Joshua.

The spies whom Joshua sent into Jericho were secreted and assisted by Rahab, the convert, who declared herself to be a believer in Jehovah. As such she and her house were spared in the sacking of the city. Thus she con-

tributed to the entrance of the tribes of Israel into the land of Promise.

ACHSAH—FIVE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

Numbers—Joshua

After the Conquest of the Land by Joshua its allotment among the tribes is an interesting study.

The tribes which were descendants of Rachel secured the central portion of the land on both sides of the Jordan. Their lands were known as the "Hill Country of Ephraim" and the "Land of Gilead." The individual inheritance given to Joshua was with Ephraim. The only other individual inheritance was at Hebron in the "Hill Country of Judah." It was given to Caleb who, with Joshua, had given to Moses a favorable report on returning from spying out the land.

Caleb gave his daughter Achsah to be the wife of his brother Othniel. Achsah caused her husband to ask of Caleb a field which was given to them. She made a further request saying, "Give me a blessing; for that thou hast set me in the land of the South, give me also springs of water." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

Othniel became the first of the Judges.

In the allotment of the land among the tribes five sisters are mentioned as appearing before the chiefs of the children of Israel, claiming inheritance as daughters, because their father had no sons. They were grand-daughters of Gilead, grandson of Manasseh, therefore of the house of Joseph, and their claims were supported by their tribe.

By their marriages within their own tribe they were given the inheritance to which they considered themselves entitled. Their names, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah, are enumerated three times, and they are interest-

ing as furnishing an example of early legislation affecting the property rights of women.

Other allotments provided for the care of the Levites. Courts of justice were established at six places called cities of refuge. At Shiloh the tent of meeting was located, providing a central place of worship.

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"AND ZELOPHEHAD HAD DAUGHTERS"

An Early Declaratory Judgment in Which the Property Rights of Women Marrying Outside of Their Tribe Are Clearly Set Forth—Binding Character of Judgment Subsequently Recognized—General Satisfaction with Procedure.

By HENRY C. CLARK
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Zelophehad belonged to the most illustrious of the families. His grandfather was Gilead, his great, great-grandfather was Manasseh, who was one of the sons of Joseph and a grandson of Jacob.

Within the thirty-ninth summer of the wandering of the tribes of Israel, Zelophehad passed away and was with his fathers. In the plains of Moab he died and was buried. After him it was written by Ezra the scribe, with a cold, significant finality: "and Zelophehad had daughters." (I Chron. VII, 15). This scribe makes no further mention of either father or daughters.

The land of Canaan was to be divided among those who were numbered. In making the enumeration daughters were not counted. Therefore under the law Zelophehad's daughters could expect no inheritance—the family of their father must be looked upon as extinct, and written childless, though he had five daughters.

These young women found themselves in a serious predicament. Why should daughters, because of sex, be deprived of an inheritance in their father's property? Were they rightless? Must they stand by and see strangers take possession of that which had been their father's?

Zelophehad's daughters determined to claim and fight for the right to inherit their father's estate. They brought a suit in court before the end of the thirty-ninth year of the wandering of the tribes. This suit is noteworthy, among other reasons, as one of the earliest reported law suits. Its date is more than three thousand years ago, and seven or eight centuries before the founding of Rome.

Moses sat as chief justice. The case was of unusual importance. To some it appeared as an attempt to overturn the law. Others, however, considered that the old, narrow law was to be enlarged to do more complete justice —to lose a portion of its harshness in the spirit of fairness. In any event, if the claims of daughters were to be recognized, the law must be changed.

The petition of these daughters to the court was brief and to the point:

> Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. (Num. XXVII, 4).

This proved unanswerable. The prayer was granted. The court declared the old law to be incomplete, one-sided. It was changed not only for this case but for all like future cases. A great victory! The judgment of the court provided:

> The daughters of Zelophehad speak right; thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

> And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter, . . . and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment. (Num. XXVII, 7, 8, 11.)

NOTE: In one of Sir Frederick Pollock's notes to Maine's "Ancient Law" he refers to the case of Zelophehad as the oldest decided case that is still cited as an authority. Its legally authoritative character is recognized by a certain Jewish community which he mentions.

This judgment was of tremendous significance. The judgment or decree was applicable to all the twelve tribes. It altered their very constitution or government. The fundamental polity of the state was changed. Whereas women had not before been counted, now they could be numbered. Whereas before in the absence of male descendants a family became extinct and the daughters penniless, now daughters could preserve the family and receive the estate.

A few months later we find Zelophehad's daughters again in court. This time "the chief fathers of the families" (Num. XXXVI, 1) of the tribe to which Zelophehad had belonged appeared before the court. Should one or more of these daughters marry into another tribe, her inheritance would go with her. Each tribe had been allotted a given amount of territory in the "Promised Land," and the possibility of the shifting of a portion of the allotment of one tribe to another tribe was a matter serious to contemplate.

With this in mind "the chief fathers" petitioned the court to give further attention to the case. This proceeding was not an appeal. No attempt was made to overturn the former judgment. The "chief fathers" sought a rehearing, and requested the court to modify the judgment by

imposing certain terms or conditions upon the young women whereby the tribe would be relieved from the possibility of loss through marriage into another tribe.

Here is what "the chief fathers" said to the court:

> If they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received; so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance. (Num. XXXVI, 3).

The rehearing was granted, and the previous judgment modified by the court as follows:

> The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well. This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry. So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance. (Num. XXXVI, 5-9.)

In no vital respect was the original judgment altered. The right to be numbered, to inherit, and to preserve the family, remained. The limitation placed upon these rights was reasonable. It was necessary to preserve the balance of power among the tribes.

No dissatisfaction with the modification of the decree appears. The judgment as amended was accepted and complied with. We are told that:

> Even as the Lord commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad: . . . And they have married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. (Num. XXXVI, 10, 12.)

The judgment obtained by Zelophehad's daughters, while a present victory, merely declared that they held the right to a future interest in the "Promised Land." Here again, even though no possession of the land itself were ever secured, the importance of the suit and its outcome stand out clearly.

Is it not cause for present day reflection to find that modern practice falls short of this ancient procedure sanctioned by Moses, in which a purely declaratory judgment appears as one of the earliest of all recorded judgments?

It is interesting to ascertain whether Zelophehad's daughters profited in a material way from the declaratory judgment in their favor.

The year after Zelophehad had been laid beneath the plains of Moab, another funeral train moved forth. The greatest of Israelitish leaders and of all lawgivers, Moses, was reverently placed in his sepulcher in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethepeor's hill.

The leadership of the children of Israel now fell upon Joshua. Shortly thereafter the waters of the River Jordan were rolled back, and the exultant Israelites marched over, into that wonderful country to which forty years of wilderness and wandering had led them—the land of Canaan——the "Promised Land"—the land "flowing with milk and

honey"—the most famous country in all history, and in later years called Palestine. Was not an inheritance in this land worth fighting for?

Seven years were required to enable the children of Israel to possess themselves of their new home and future fatherland. These were seven strenuous years. The native tribes and inhabitants did not peaceably retire before the new-comers. The land was possessed by might and conquest. But at the end of seven years Joshua made a distribution of the land, tribe by tribe, and family by family. We find it recorded:

> Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters; and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the Lord he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father. (Joshua XVII, 3, 4.)

Here are presented again Zelophehad's daughters asserting their rights. This they stand upon their declaratory judgment, as *res judicata.* The judgment is so recognized, and given effect. Was ever any court proceeding more orderly? Did ever any court proceeding accomplish more complete relief? Was it not for the welfare of all concerned that the rights of these heirs were declared before they had been violated? How much better this preventive, declaratory procedure, than a curative, coercive remedy after the property had come into the possession of adverse holders.

It is not inappropriate to add: Wherein is Zelophehad

distinguishable from millions of unknown names in history? "And Zelophehad had daughters."

JUDGES

The events recorded in the book of Judges cover a period of over three hundred years and are a few outstanding episodes. The history follows a cycle often repeated of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance.

The social conditions of the time are shown, and reveal a lack of organic unity, as "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Moral ideals were crude, treachery was commended, and vicious deeds were encouraged. The only bond of unity was the worship of Jehovah at Shiloh.

The notable women are Deborah, Jephthah's daughter, the mother of Samson, and Delilah.

DEBORAH

As the Tribal Age advanced and the tribes increased in numbers, their leaders who had been known as "Heads of father's houses" came to be called "Judges." Their duties seemed to include that of being leaders in war against their enemies. They seem to have been chosen on account of inherent qualities, fitting them for leadership in times of stress and danger.

Deborah, a prophetess, has the rare honor, for a woman, of being a Judge in Israel. She dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah in the hill country of Ephraim.

Among those who came to her for judgment were chiefs of the northern tribes, who were being crushed under the invading hosts of Canaanites, who made plundering raids, stealing produce and cattle and leaving no defensive weapons among their victims. Their plight and discouragement aroused Deborah to plan a campaign of resist-

ance. In Judges 4 we have a prose account of the battle and rout of the enemy when Deborah went in person as the inspiration of Barak and his fighting men.

In Judges 5 we have the poetic account of the same action known as "Deborah's Song," thought to be one of the earliest expressions of patriotic feeling. "Bless the Lord, for that the *leaders* took the lead and that the *people* offered themselves willingly."

Their desolate condition is pictured, followed by an account of the muster, the battle, and the rout. A cloudburst making a rushing torrent of the Kishon River contributed to the victory. Some tribes are censured for keeping safely away but others are placed on the honor roll (or service flag as we should say) for they "jeoparded their lives unto the death, upon the high places of the field."

Jael, wife of Heber, is commended because she beguiled Sisera, Captain of the Canaanite Army, into her tent where she killed him with a tent pin.

The mother of Sisera is pictured surrounded by her ladies-in-waiting as overcome with anxiety and dread because her son does not appear returning with the spoils of victory, including a damsel, two damsels to every man.

The poem is full of intense exultation—all nature and the divine direction are included in the themes for thanksgiving. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." A poem of our late world war, "We rest in Chateau Thierry," by Farrington has this reference to Deborah's poem:

"No, little sister, the stars are not harsh in their shining,
For they are the ones who with Deborah's hosts,
And with Barak's men, fought in their courses to win;
And they helped on the big hill, the woods, and at Vaux;
You must watch them and love them as ever."

Deborah's song closes with a prayer that as Sisera fell fighting against God's people, so may all his enemies perish, "But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

We may class Deborah not only as a prophetess and a judge, but as a strong character and true Daughter of Patriotism showing that while men's work is to execute, woman's work is to inspire, relying upon God. Her life exemplified her prayer, "O my Soul march on with strength."

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

Jephthah has the terrible distinction among lawless leaders of lawless tribes of having doomed his daughter to die a human sacrifice to keep a vow unto the Lord.

Going out to lead the tribes of Gilead against Ammon, Jephthah vowed that should he return victorious he would offer as a burnt offering whatsoever "should come forth of the doors of his house" to meet him.

Among Tissot's Bible pictures one of the most charming is that of Jephthah's daughter. She appears a perfect type of oriental beauty in a graceful pose holding her timbrel above her head. Her brightly colored ornaments and flowing robe and scarf seem to express the dancing rhythm of one joyous with all the exuberance of youth and happiness; coming, alas, not knowing of his vow! to meet her victorious father. And she was his only child.

"Alas, my daughter!" cries Jephthah. But neither he nor his daughter seem to question the necessity of keeping the vow. Indeed she confirms it by saying that having vowed unto the Lord he must do unto her according to his word. We wonder if her mother was not living to protest.

She asked for and received a respite of two months to be spent with chosen companions in a mountain place apart to bewail her fate.

We can scarcely overdraw the tragic scene marking the closing of her bright young life, when she returned unto her father and he did unto her according to his vow. It was sufficiently unusual to have been marked by a custom that the daughters of Israel went yearly to celebrate the anniversary of her sacrifice four days in a year.

No incident in the tribal history shows so clearly how the religious ideas of the tribes were affected by the heathen regarded with such abhorrence that it undoubtedly served peoples around them. The death of this fair daughter was as a great warning against heathen ideas and practices. In this way her death was of service to the world.

THE MOTHER OF SAMSON

Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, anticipated the birth of their distinguished son by dedicating themselves through prayer and sacrifice to honor God through their child. He was to live the life of a Nazarite under restrictions as to eating and drinking and cutting of the hair.

These restrictions were also to be binding on the prospective mother and seem later to have been transferred to her and borne by her instead of her son. She seems to have welcomed the idea of a great service through her child and to have trusted the promise of an angel that he should save his people from the hand of the Philistines.

"She called his name Samson and the child grew and the Lord blessed him," and through him his devoted mother.

DELILAH

The name of Delilah is an outstanding one among women of the Bible. It is to be noted that she was not of the Chosen People, but a Philistine whose relations with

Samson were those of assuming love for him, for the purpose of betraying him to her people who were his enemies. She is called "The Traitress" and is despised and held up as an example of an evil minded woman.

Samson has been lauded for physical strength although lacking in moral qualities. Men still honor their heavy weight champions as they did in his time.

Samson has been portrayed by Salvini and honored by Milton in his poem "Samson Agonistes," also by Saint-Saens in his opera "Samson and Delilah."

When the captured and blinded hero, sacrifices himself by pulling down the Temple of Dagon upon the heads of the Philistines, Delilah perishes with her people.

She serves as an example of a victor vanquished and as a warning against the sin of treachery.

THE MOTHER OF MICAH, AND A CONCUBINE

The tribal period gives many examples of low moral standards. One showing the prevalence of superstition, idol worship, and light regard for moral laws is that of Micah and his mother, image makers in the hill country of Ephraim.

The mother of Micah is mentioned as devoting some money for the making of a household image. A wandering Levite became their household priest. Micah's oracles were consulted by spies sent out by the tribe of Dan, seeking a new location. These spies took away with them the priest and they also stole the images made by Micah for his mother. This tribe established a shrine at their new location on the extreme northeast border of Canaan, at Dan. It is said to have continued as a local sanctuary until the time of the captivity of the Northern Kingdom.

Another incident showing a low estimate of women is that of the Levite traveling with his concubine. When he

is set upon by a band of violent Benjaminites his concubine is given over to their lust even unto death. The war of the other tribes against Benjamin to avenge this crime seems to have been more on account of their violation of the laws of hospitality than of abhorrence of their treatment of the woman.

Her terrible fate probably aroused a kinder sentiment toward women and so may have contributed toward the growth of higher ideals which are conspicuous in women who presently succeeded her. It was a time of transition, some women were debased while others were honored.

NAOMI—ORPAH—RUTH

Ruth

The characters in the book of Ruth are among the best known among the Women of the Old Testament. It seems superfluous to write their story in detail, as it presents no difficulties and can best be read from the book itself.

Naomi was of the tribe of Judah, and her home was in Bethlehem. Driven by famine, her husband, Elimelech, took her with their sons, Chilion and Mahlon, to dwell in the land of Moab. They would traverse dry stony desert stretches near the Dead Sea but would find fertile well-watered valleys in the tableland of Moab, east of the Dead Sea.

The people of Moab worshipped Chemosh and practised human sacrifice. It was probably a grief to Elimelech and Naomi that their sons married Orpah and Ruth, Moabite maidens, since the Jewish law forbade such marriages.

Elimelech and both of the sons died, and Naomi determined to return to Judah. She tried to dissuade Orpah and Ruth from their purpose to return with her. Orpah remained with her own people but Ruth notwithstanding

the sorrow of parting from Orpah, persisted in her purpose to go with Naomi. Ruth's pledge of devotion is unsurpassed in all literature:

"Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee:
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God my God;
Where thou diest, will I die
And there will I be buried:
The Lord do so to me, and more also
If aught but death part thee and me."

One should try to visualize the little town of Bethlehem. It was a walled city. The gate where the elders sat in council, and the well where the women and especially the young girls went for daily supplies of water, were important places. The tomb of Rachel was outside the walls, as were the grain fields and pasture lands.

The gate has been compared with the barber shop, the corner or the town hall, as a place where men congregate. The well was a similar place for women and took the place of the newspaper for disseminating news, as every family had to be represented there by its water carrier every day.

The arrival of Naomi with Ruth, the Alien, created a great deal of interest. Naomi's old friends crowded around to welcome her, and to hear of her experiences. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" And she said, "Call me not Naomi, (pleasant) call me Mara: (bitter) for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me."

According to the custom of their time, the position of these two widows was very pitiful. Help came to them through a wealthy kinsman Boaz, whose possessions were

notable. He became interested in Ruth and came to love her. Naomi favored his suit. Theirs is a charming story of a happy marriage. Ruth was modest and gentle. Boaz was generous and noble in character. Their child Obed became the grandfather of David. So this young woman of an alien race by encouragement and sympathetic treatment brought a blessing to the people who received her kindly. She became an ancestress of Christ. Naomi took the child to her heart. Her life was transformed from grief and hopelessness to living interest. She is an example to middle-aged women to revive interest in life by service to younger people.

Naomi's neighbors in blessing her reminded her that her daughter-in-law was better unto her than seven sons. She must have been lovable to have been so beloved.

HANNAH—PENINNAH

I Samuel

Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, was the mother of Samuel. She had a rival in Peninnah, who was another wife of Elkanah. Their home was in the hill country of Ephraim. Peninnah had children but Hannah was childless, and was treated contemptuously by the more fortunate wife, who provoked Hannah and caused her to fret and weep and to leave her food untasted. But Elkanah loved Hannah and gave her a double portion when gifts were bestowed upon the wives and children. This occurred at the time of the yearly journey when the tribes assembled to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh.

It was very important that the people keep the central place of worship in Shiloh, and for over three hundred years it was almost the only bond that held the tribes together during this period of struggle for existence.

It was at Shiloh that Elkanah found Hannah weeping over Peninnah's taunts and said to her, "Hannah, why weepest thou? And why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" So she was comforted, but poured out the bitterness of her soul in prayer before the Lord. She was observed and reproved by Eli, the priest, as he sat near the door of the tabernacle because as she wept and moved her lips in prayer, he thought she had been drunken. She told him of her sorrow, and of her vow to dedicate the son for whom she prayed to the Lord, to give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.

Hannah is called the "Praying Mother," for Samuel not only came in answer to prayer but had pre-natal influences to piety and was reared in faith and love to God.

All the details of the family pilgrimage to Shiloh and their return to their home are interesting as giving an insight into the customs of the time.

The fathers took their wives and children to what must have been a very large gathering of all the people. The gifts for the sacrifice and for the service of the priests were also taken. The people traveled in caravans with festal songs and merriment. Thus Elkanah's family returned home.

In due time the son Samuel was born. The birth of a son was always celebrated with ceremonies of rejoicing. These must have been of unusual fervor and must have filled Hannah's heart with a feeling of great responsibility. Her feelings are expressed in a song of thanksgiving which has been preserved. It is an outburst of adoration and praise of Jehovah. "My heart exulteth in the Lord. By him actions are weighed, he bringeth low, he also lifteth up. The pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he shall judge the ends of the earth." Mary's song of praise

at the birth of Jesus, called the "Magnificat" is very similar in form and sentiment.

Hannah was faithful to her vow. When the child was weaned she took him to the priest Eli at Shiloh to appear before the Lord, and there abide forever. She said, "For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition. Therefore, I also have granted him to the Lord, as long as he liveth." Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year when she came up to offer the yearly sacrifice. How she must have longed for him during the passing months and eagerly anticipated the annual visit! With what pride she would adjust his new robe and gird on the little linen ephod! The ephod was a part of the priest's costume and marked the child as one permitted to minister before the Lord.

In Mrs. Hemans' poem entitled, "The Hebrew Mother," Hannah is represented as saying, "Alas! my boy, thy gentle clasp is on me—How shall I hence depart? And oh! the home whence thy bright smile hath parted. Will He not hear thee, shall He not guard thy rest? I give thee to thy God. Precious as thou art, thou shalt be His child." Elkanah and Hannah had three other sons and two daughters but the child Samuel grew before the Lord.

It is much to be able to say that Samuel fulfilled his mother's expectations. He was the last and greatest of the Judges. A constructive statesman and patriot, zealous in the service of the Lord. A praying mother, giving such a son to be a leader of his people has rendered a great and heroic service.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF ELI

The judge, Eli, with whom Samuel spent his childhood, had two unworthy sons, Hophni and Phinehas. They took

the Sacred Chest, or Ark of God into battle against the Philistines, who won the battle and captured the Ark.

Eli's two sons were slain. Eli was very aged and the shock of this triple calamity caused his death. His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, hearing of all these calamities died after bringing forth a son whom she named Ichabod meaning "the glory is departed" since the Ark of God had been taken.

The Ark and central place of worship was not restored until the time of David and the people lamented after the Lord.

PERIOD III.—AGE OF THE KINGDOM-REGAL LIFE

II Sam.—Kings

Hannah's son Samuel has been called "The King Maker." He inaugurated the Kingdom and anointed the first two kings, Saul and David. Polygamy continued, and the wives and concubines were housed together under surveillance. Rivalry existed, mothers being especially jealous for their children. Queens suffered many trials in common with all women of their time.

AHINOAM, THE WIFE OF SAUL

I Sam.

Ahinoam was the first queen. Saul, the first king, had no precedents, no capital, or palace. After his coronation he returned to his home, until called forth to lead in battle. He organized an army, showed great physical courage and military leadership. His wife would necessarily be a homeless attendant in the camp or near the battle field. When his life became embittered by his jealousy of David, she would have to "minister to a mind diseased."

Her consolation must have been in her children. Three sons and two daughters are named. Her noble son, Jonathan, was brave, capable, popular, trustworthy. His unselfish friendship for David has become proverbial. Such a man would surely tenderly requite his mother's love. Probably she did not live to know of the tragic death of her husband and her sons, or the cruel fate of Merah's five sons.

Her son Jonathan is commemorated in David's Elegy. As he could not have inherited his noble qualities from his father, it is not unreasonable to infer that he owed them to his mother.

THE WITCH OF ENDOR

I Sam.

Saul, shortly before his death, being in great danger before his enemies, consulted the witch of Endor. She was a diviner who claimed to have the power of calling back the spirits of the dead. "Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land." She feared to serve him, but he prevailed upon her to give him a message from Samuel.

The message foretold a great disaster; the complete defeat of the army and the death of Saul and his sons. These incidents furnish an interesting study of primitive beliefs in magic, divination, and sorcery. They also illustrate the power of mental attitudes toward danger. Saul was defeated before the battle. "He fell straightway his full length upon the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel, and there was no strength in him for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night."

In his sore trouble the woman spoke kindly to him. She prepared food and prevailed upon him to eat. She showed a womanly spirit of sympathy and gave willing service to one who went away downhearted to meet his tragic fate.

RIZPAH—MERAB

II Sam: 3 and 21

Rizpah was a concubine of Saul's, on whose death she was appropriated by Abner, Saul's General, and regent for Saul's son Ishbosheth.

The sharp words of reproof from the young King to Abner and his reply show that the household of concubines was regarded as property to be handed down from a king to his successor.

A further incident gives evidence that little regard was shown for the children of concubines. It also reveals the superstition that calamities were a punishment for some definite sin. "There was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year." It was divined to be a punishment from Jehovah because of Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites. When David sought to make atonement, the Gibeonites refused money but asked the lives of seven of Saul's sons. And the King said, "I will give them."

Two sons of Rizpah and five sons of *Merab*, Saul's daughter were hanged in the mountain before the Lord. "And Rizpah took sackcloth and spread it upon the rock and kept a terrible vigil over the dead until rain descended. She suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night." Her vigil expressed repentance and ended when the anger of the Lord relented. David gave proper burial to these victims of an ancient grudge. Rizpah's terrible experience has been commemorated by poets and artists.

MICHAL

I Sam: 19—II Sam: 3

King David had many wives. The first, Michal, was a daughter of Saul. Her older sister Merab had been promised to David as a reward for valiant fighting for Saul. Merab was given to another suitor and Michal, who then loved David, was given to him instead of her sister. Saul's purpose was that she might be a snare unto him, but in this he was disappointed.

Michal, by her vigilance and strategy saved David's life when her father had sent messengers to watch his house and slay him. Michal let David down through the window: "and he went, and fled, and escaped." She concealed his escape by substituting a figure under the bed coverings,

and reporting to Saul's messengers that he was sick. Saul gave her to another husband, but she was afterward returned to David.

Michal changed toward David after they came to live in Jerusalem. On the great day when the ark of the covenant was returned to Jerusalem and the worship of Jehovah re-established, David in the procession "danced before the Lord with all his might." "And it was so, as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, that Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out at the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart." After the great ceremonies of the day were over "David returned to bless his household." Michal met him and spoke in sarcasm, "How glorious was the King of Israel today!" She charged him with a shameless lack of dignity and reserve. His reply showed that he wished to place the service of the Lord above every personal consideration.

Although Michal lacked appreciation of David's spiritual nature and held his high ideals in contempt, it is remembered to her credit that she was helpful to him in his early struggles, when he was most in need of her help.

ABIGAIL

I Sam: 25

Abigail, "the wise," had a romantic life. She lived in a small place in Southern Judah. Her husband, Nabal, was very wealthy "but churlish and evil in his doings." Abigail was that rare combination of a woman "of good understanding and of a beautiful countenance." The story begins with a busy time of sheep shearing, there being three thousand sheep. The preparation of food for the shearers was Abigail's responsibility.

David fleeing before Saul's jealous attacks arrived in the vicinity of Nabal's farm, with a band of fighting men. They were in need of food and shelter. Nabal and David were of the same tribe and David had protected Nabal's possessions. He sent a group of young men with a courteous message of greeting and a request for food saying, "Let the young men find favour in thine eyes; for we come in a good day: Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David."

Nabal answered, "Who is David? There be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men of whom I know not whence they be?"

David and his armed men were angry, especially at the manner in which their request had been refused. They threatened to take what they needed forcibly, and wreck vengeance on Nabal. It was told Abigail that Nabal had insulted the messengers, and that he flew upon them, "for he is such a son of Balial, that one cannot speak to him."

Then Abigail made haste. The provisions which she took to David and his men were largely the products of her own labours, and of the women. They included bread, wine, dressed meat, corn, raisins, and cakes of figs.

When the asses were laden and one brought for herself to ride upon she took her offering to David, and very wisely *she told not her husband.* It is needless to say that as she alighted and humbly presented her offering to David, his anger changed into admiration and her gift was gratefully accepted.

Abigail not only gave of her provisions, but she spoke words of encouragement and hope for David's cause. She prophesied that David should yet be a prince over Israel. When Abigail returned home, Nabal was holding

a feast. His heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken. Abigail again showed wisdom as she told him nothing less or more until the morning light. In the morning when she told Nabal these things "his heart died within him, and he became as a stone." In about ten days he died.

David was thankful that he had refrained from violence against Nabal. David sought Abigail to be his wife. After suitable ceremonies she came to him and certainly her riches would be useful to his cause. Her good heart and her wisdom probably had much to do in influencing his policies and practices in the formative years before he became king of his own tribe; also during the seven years that followed while he was learning the king business, before he became king of all the tribes, and established his capital in Jerusalem.

Abigail bore David a son at Hebron. The further record of her life has not been preserved. Undoubtedly she had great influence, over David, and her influence was according to her prayer "The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God: because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord."

BATHSHEBA

II Sam: 11

Bathsheba was the most famous wife of David. She was the wife of Uriah, one of David's faithful generals. David was so fascinated by her beauty, that he gave way to a passionate desire to possess her. Women seemed to be like pawns among Kings and apparently had no power to combat the King's commands. David after seducing Bathsheba had her husband killed in a very treacherous manner, while he was leading his army against the foe. David then took Bathsheba and made her queen. Their first child died. Of him David spoke the much

quoted funeral text. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Psalm fifty-one the great outpouring of a contrite sinner is the outcome of David's sin and repentance. "Have mercy O God, wash me, cleanse me. Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me."

The next child born to David and Bathsheba was Solomon. The records of the last years of David's reign are largely accounts of court intrigues. There were several wives, each hopeful that her first-born son should succeed to David's throne. The influential men of the court and of the army took sides with one or another candidate.

Tamar, the fair sister of Absalom, was vilely betrayed, seduced, and cast off by Amnon, another son of David. This wrong done to his sister gave Absalom a pretext to kill Ammon which he accomplished.

Ahinoam, mother of Amnon; *Maacah,* mother of Absalom; *Haggith,* mother of Adonijah, were wives of David whose sons perished while intriguing for the succession. Each was the oldest son of his mother and each of these mothers had every reason to strive for the rights of her son.

Maacah, mother of Absalom, was the daughter of a king of a border tribe, with whom Absalom took refuge after murdering Amnon. After David gave his consent for Absalom to return to Jerusalem, he intrigued against David. Growing weary of inactivity Absalom went to Hebron, his birthplace, where he raised an army in rebellion against his father. His defeat, and death, at the hand of Joab were important events in David's reign, and a tragedy in the life of his mother.

The final contest for the succession lay between Adonijah and Solomon. Bathsheba obtained the powerful support of Nathan, the prophet, and Zadok, the priest. Together they obtained from the dying monarch a royal decree designating Solomon to be anointed and proclaimed as David's successor.

Bathsheba's statement that the mother whose son was not crowned king, would "be counted an offender" states but mildly the humiliating position of the less favored wives. Solomon attended to his security by having all possible rival claimants to the throne put to death.

His pretext for decreeing the death of Adonijah was the latter's request to have *Abishag*, the last mentioned of David's concubines, for his wife. This was construed as a claim to the throne.

Solomon developed weak and sinful characteristics which he did not inherit from his father. In the absence of any proof it would probably be unfair to assume that they came to him from his mother. While there is no positive proof that she was to blame for David's sin against her husband over whose death she made lamentation, there is also no record of any inspiring acts or words traceable to her. Her life illustrates the principle that injustice and inferiority imposed upon mothers is followed by shortcomings in their sons.

Some of David's greatest spiritual psalms are due to his life with Bathsheba. Her son Solomon made a distinct contribution to his time by promoting commerce, by building, by establishing schools of learning, and by wise administration of justice. His dedication of the magnificent temple which he had built on Mt. Moriah, to the worship of Jehovah, was the crowning achievement of his life. It gave a spiritual influence to prophets, priests, and kings, renewed by Jesus and the apostles. It affords the wailing place of the Jews until this day.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

I Kings: 10

Queens as wives of reigning monarchs seem to have had little prominence. A queen mother had great influence

and much consideration shown her. A reigning queen had the authority of a king.

The Queen of Sheba has a notable place in the records of Solomon's court. Tradition has added to the Bible account. She was a contemporary monarch, queen of a kingdom of the Sabaeans in southern Arabia. She had heard of the fame of King Solomon concerning the name of the Lord. She had also heard of the magnificence of his court and its administration, and of the renowned temple and its commanding situation. She came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels bearing costly gifts of spices, gold, and precious stones. After viewing all his splendor and exchanging royal courtesies and presents she made the famous comment, "I believed not the words, until I came and mine eyes had seen; and behold, the half was not told me." Solomon gave her of his royal bounty and she returned to her own land.

Legend affirms that she became a wife or concubine of Solomon. Her visit has been a favorite subject for artists. She was in advance of her times as a woman of an alert and aspiring intelligence, a prototype of the women who had to overcome resistance to obtain education for women. She was a seeker after knowledge.

THE WIFE OF JEREBOAM

I Kings: 14

The division of the kingdom weakened both branches and ushered in a period of turmoil and strife ending in the fall, first of the Northern Kingdom and after one hundred years of the Southern Kingdom also. Mention of women is infrequent.

The first king, Jereboam, sent his wife on a sad mission to inquire of the Lord concerning the fate of their sick child. Ahijah, the prophet, gave her a terrifying message of evil to fall upon the house of Jereboam, add-

ing, "Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine house, and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die."

"And Jereboam's wife arose; and as she came to the threshold of the house, the child died." This was a punishment for the sin of idolatry. No word of pity for the sorrowing mother is expressed.

THE WIDOW OF ZEREPHATH

I Kings: 17

Elijah was the great hero of the Northern Kingdom. One of his first experiences was of a great drought and famine which drove him wherever water was to be found. As he came to Zerephath in Zidon he found a widow there gathering sticks. He asked her for water and also for a morsel of bread.

She explained that she had only a last handful of meal and a little oil for herself and her son between them and starvation. Trusting Elijah's assurance that the meal and oil should not fail until rain should come, she practiced the customary oriental hospitality, sharing what she had with the needy wayfarer.

She received a great reward. The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail. Later when her son was stricken that he seemed as one dead she appealed to Elijah. At his intercession the child revived. This Zidonian woman came to have faith saying, "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord is truth."

JEZEBEL

I Kings 18; II Kings 9

The northern Kingdom was without a permanent capital until Omri, who is called the "David of the North," established the government at Samaria on a very sightly eminence.

Royal buildings were added until the location is mentioned by a prophet as the "Crown of pride of Ephraim at the head of the fat valley." Ahab was prince of this royal house, and is called the "Solomon of the North." The fathers expanded and strengthened the Kingdom. The sons dissipated resources in extravagant living and oppressed the people.

When Ahab was to be married an alliance with Tyre was decided upon. Jezebel, of Tyre, a daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, was taken as his bride. Their marriage was probably a very elaborate and luxurious wedding festival. Oriental wedding feasts and ceremonies last for a week or more. This royal wedding of luxury-loving Ahab and Jezebel would be an international event.

It instituted an alliance between Israel and Tyre, which included an alliance between their gods Jehovah and Baal. There followed busy times in Samaria. New places were constructed. One was an ivory palace in the mountains at Jezreel. New buildings were needed to provide homes for the great train of attendants.

Of Baal priests there were four hundred and fifty and, of priests of the Asherah, four hundred that ate at Jezebel's table. "Ahab reared up an altar to Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria, and he went and served Baal and worshipped him." Recent excavations have uncovered foundations of Ahab's buildings.

Baal worship was licentious and very demoralizing. There were shrines and altars with pillars surrounded by groves where luxury and license prevailed. When supported and encouraged by the royal family, this worship became popular with the people. The worship of Jehovah appeared strict and austere in comparison.

This idolatrous worship was the chief cause of the subsequent fall of the nation. It was the chief issue in the conflict between Elijah and Jezebel. It has been described

as a cancer on the body politic, which spread into the southern Kingdom. It required a major operation of surgery for its removal. It almost took the life of the patients and left them weakened throughout the rest of their existence.

Obadiah, a worshipper of Jehovah, was also an officer over the royal household. When Jezebel slew many of the prophets of the Lord, and decreed their extermination, Obadiah risked his life by hiding one hundred of them in a cave and feeding them with bread and water.

Elijah with great moral courage confronted Ahab at a time of famine by rebuking the royal house. Ahab said, "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?" Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed the Baalim."

The rest of Elijah's life was devoted to the championship of Jehovah and resistance of Baalism. Jezebel was the power behind the throne. The contest between Elijah and the priests of Baal which resulted in the defeat of Baal and the slaughter of the Baal priests followed. When Jezebel heard of it, she determined to take the life of Elijah.

Elijah fled and found new courage in his despair at the mount of God. He came back to organize opposition to Baalism through his successors Elisha and Jehu.

In Elijah's second contest with Ahab and Jezebel he comes forward as champion of the rights of the people against tyranny of the throne. The story of Naboth's vineyard need not be recorded here. The taking of it is Jezebel's great crime. The false accusations, the mock trial and wicked murder of Naboth were carried out by her orders. She exulted in her achievement. Ahab is described as he which did sell himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

Elijah prophesied a tragic death for her and Ahab and their children. Jezebel outlived Elijah and Ahab. Her death was accomplished in the rebellion instigated by Elisha and carried out by Jehu. When her palace at Jezreel was besieged, her servants threw her out of the window, and gruesome details of her fate are told.

She is an example of the possibilities for evil of a strong-willed, wicked woman, with position and power. She has been called a prototype of Lady Macbeth, and her name symbolizes the extreme limit in heartlessness and cruelty. In the passion play, the trial of Naboth is used as the preliminary Old Testament tableau to precede the mock trial of Jesus.

ATHALIAH—JEHOSHEBA

II Kings: 11

Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. She was married to the prince of the Kingdom of Judah. She repeated the experience of her mother. The worship of Baal was introduced into the courts of Jehovah in Jerusalem.

Athaliah's son was slain in the rebellion of Jehu which accomplished the death of Jezebel. Athaliah was as murderous-hearted as her mother. To make herself secure as the queen regent she had all royal claimants put to death.

One little grandson, Joash, was saved by his Aunt *Jehosheba.* "She stole him away from the King's sons that were slain, and his nurse; and they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not slain."

When Joash was seven years old, he was produced and proclaimed King in a rebellion instigated by the priests of Jehovah. Their purpose to destroy Baal worship and worshippers was carried out.

When Athaliah heard the noise and saw the child Joash crowned, surrounded by armed guards, and all the people

rejoicing, she rent her clothes and cried, "Treason, treason." She was slain beside the royal palace, for the priest said, "Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord."

The priest Jehoiada was regent for the child. He caused a renewal of the covenant between Jehovah and his people. The worship of Jehovah was re-established in Jerusalem.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Conditions affecting the lives of women during the monarchy are revealed in minor incidents from various walks of life.

Zeruiah, sister of David, was the mother of three famous fighting sons; Abishai, Joab, and Asahel, two of whom were tragically put to death. Their father's name is not mentioned.

Joab, David's general, introduced the "*Wise woman* of Tekoah" to influence a reconciliation between David and Absalom. During David's life time a "*wise woman of Abel*" took a very active part in settling a battle and siege between rival tribes.

One of Solomon's wise decisions was that concerning *two women*, each claiming the same infant. The bride in the song of Solomon called "*The Shulammite*" was a rustic maiden from the royal vineyards of Lebanon. Her introduction among the women of Solomon's court pictures a striking social contrast. Her love for nature, gardening and the springtime are suggestive of a great yearning among secluded women. It explains their ecstacy in their brief sojourns out of doors.

In Elisha's time he was helpful to *a widow* of one of the sons of the prophets. Her poverty shows that the schools of the prophets were not supported by tithes, but dependent upon free will offerings. The young men evidently had to combine schooling with remunerative employment. They

were allowed to marry and had families. A creditor could take children to be bondmen.

"*The Shunammite*" is described as a great woman. She was probably wealthy. Her home life with her husband is quite fully described. Becoming interested in Elisha as he passed "she constrained him to eat bread" as oft as he passed by. She and her husband perceived that he was a holy man. They made for him a little chamber on the wall and set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick. She was rewarded by the birth of a son; Elisha was instrumental in saving the life of the child when he was overcome by sun stroke in the field with his father and the reapers. Elisha also assisted her in the recovery of her estate.

Near the close of the monarchy when the young king Josiah was instituting reforms he sent a group of five prominent men to "*Huldah*, the prophetess" to inquire the will of the Lord. She was the wife of the keeper of the wardrobe and dwelt in Jerusalem in the second quarter, or college, as some have interpreted the word, Mishneh. She was evidently an authority on the Law and held in honor by the King and his counselors.

In the apocrypha one may read of *Judith*, a heroine of the Northern Kingdom, and of her triumph over Holofernes and his advancing army. Many artists have depicted Judith.

PERIOD IV.—AGE OF CAPTIVITY—SERVILE LIFE

THE ISRAELITISH MAID

II Kings

Of the many women in Bible times who were carried away captive out of their land there are few of whom records remain.

In the time of Elisha there was warfare between Syria and Israel. "The Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid." When we read these words we should read between the lines of the broken ties of home and country, of the sorrow of those taken away and of those remaining desolate.

This little maid was fortunate in being placed to wait on the wife of Naaman. As a successful general and mighty man of valor, Naaman was held in honor by all Syria. He was captain of the host, or army of the King of Syria, but he was a leper. The little maid said unto her mistress, "Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! Then would he recover him of his leprosy."

How her prayer was fulfilled is a very familiar story. Elisha and the leper, the servants, the kings, and the rivers of both countries are prominent in the account. We are left to imagine the effect on the fortunes of the little maid, and on the priests of Rimmon, the God of Syria.

NEHUSHTA, QUEEN AND CAPTIVE

II Kings

During the last years of the Kingdom there is almost no mention of women. Their lives were overwhelmed with the sorrows of the Nation. Nehushta was closely related

to the last five kings of Judah. Her father was Elnathan, a prominent man of Jerusalem. He was probably a friend and counselor of King Josiah and of the prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah, the latter being the King's cousin.

As a little girl Nehushta may have gone with her father on visits to the King. She may have known *Huldah* the prophetess and the priests at the temple. She was married to the King's oldest son, Jehoiakim. Probably her life looked very bright before her until the great calamity of the death of Josiah who was slain in battle with an Egyptian army.

Josiah's servants carried him dead, in a chariot from Megiddo, to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulcher. The last hope for the National existence vanished with the death of Josiah.

The thirteen or more years of siege and suffering, culminating in the fall of Jerusalem are described in the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations. Nehushta's husband desired an alliance with Egypt. Josiah's friends and party who were opposed to Egypt, took Josiah's second son and made him King in his father's stead. He was soon dethroned by a strong Egyptian army and taken captive to Egypt where he died. Jehoiakim backed by Egypt began to reign. Nehushta shared the brief tragic years with him.

If Nehushta loved her father and Josiah's friends, she would be out of sympathy with her husband. If she shared his views, she would be opposed to Jeremiah. The King and his party had Jeremiah shut up in prison. The King derided and burned the warning messages which Jeremiah sent by Baruch.

The first deportation of captives from Jerusalem to Babylon took place while Jehoiakim was suffering his last sickness. He died in his bed, the only one of the house of Josiah to escape a tragic fate. The armies of Babylon were moving on the city when he died. His son Jehoiachin

succeeded him. Nehushta was now queen mother for a few brief months. Her son though only eighteen years old was married. The great deportation soon followed. The King of Babylon took captive the King, his mother (Nehushta), his wives, his officers, his princes, and his servants. He carried away from Jerusalem all the mighty men, all the chief men of the land, all the craftsmen, and the smiths.

The city was destroyed, the treasures were stripped from the temple and carried away as spoil. The houses were burned. Perhaps Nehushta may have seen the fire consuming her father's house, and all things precious in her life. None remained but the poorest sort of the people. Josiah's third son Zedekiah was set up as a nominal king under Babylon. In the final siege of the city Zedekiah tried to escape. He was captured. His sons were killed before him, the last sight he was ever to see, for they "put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon," to join Nehushta and the other captives.

Nehushta was the daughter-in-law of a king; the sister-in-law of two kings; the wife of a king, and mother of a king. She might well say with the poet, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him."

VASHTI—ESTHER

Book of Esther

During one hundred years or more after the fall of Jerusalem the Bible gives scarcely any account of women. Ezekiel, "The Watchman of the Captivity" tells of the fluctuating hopes, doubts, and fears of the captives. The death of Ezekiel's wife is mentioned. The writings of the Persian rule and of the return from captivity are also almost silent about women.

Among the captives carried away from Jerusalem with Nehushta and her son Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah) was Mordecai, a Benjamite. He was the guardian of his cousin Hadassah or Esther who was bereft of father and mother. The maiden was fair and beautiful and Mordecai took her for his own daughter. They lived in the Persian city of Shushan.

Ahasuerus (or Xerxes) was King of the Persian Empire. Vashti was queen. Haman was chief courtier. The King celebrating his great prosperity, gave a prolonged feast, unto all his princes and servants. When all were merry with wine, the King commanded that the queen be brought to show the people and princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.

Queen Vashti defied the King's command and refused to come. The King was very wroth and his anger burned in him. The King took counsel with his princes and decreed that Vashti should be deposed and her royal estate given to another. The princes and men of the provinces were greatly excited. They said, "This deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women to make their husbands contemptible in their eyes." There followed a decree into all the King's provinces "that every man should bear rule in his own house." There is no record as to its enforcement.

Modern women can hardly realize the degradation of even a king's favorite in that far off day. Women have a thrill of pride in Vashti, the predecessor of the once derided champions of women's rights. Vashti had nothing to gain and everything to lose. She gave all that she had and all that she was to ennoble womanhood.

To tell the story of Esther would be to reprint the book that bears her name. She succeeded Vashti as the King's favorite and queen.

Mordecai refused to bow down in reverence before Haman as the King had commanded. Wherefore Haman

sought to destroy all the Jews throughout the whole kingdom. He erected a gallows to hang Mordecai thereon, at the instigation of his wife Zeresh, who was also an enemy of the Jews.

Mordecai instructed Esther to exert her influence with the King to save her people. He said, "Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther was the means of saving her people. Haman was humiliated and punished for his wickedness and Mordecai was exalted and honored. There followed a great slaughter of the Persians by the Jews. Their victory is commemorated by the Feast of Purim. This feast is celebrated in every land where there are Jews unto this day.

Esther and Mordecai are examples of the faithful among the Jews of the Dispersion. Their tombs are preserved and honored. They are shown at Hamadan (Shushan or Ecbatana), one of the Capitals of Persia. A large mound near the city is pointed out as the site of the palace of Ahasuerus.

The oratorio of "Esther the beautiful Queen" with proper costumes and settings makes the story seem very real and the characters very human. There is a charm about the character of Esther. Her natural timidity and fear made her pessimistic about her success. Her bravery in the performance of her duty is revealed in her firm declaration, "I go unto the King, and if I perish, I perish."

The Women of The Returned Captives

Ezra

Among the Jews who returned to Jerusalem and Judah there was great discouragement. Zerubbabel, the Governor; Jeshua, the high Priest; and the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, after much delay accomplished the rebuilding of the Temple.

About fifty years later Ezra and Nehemiah instituted reforms and re-established the worship of Jehovah. One of these reforms was the annulling of all foreign marriages, and the breaking up of such families. This must have entailed great suffering among the women and children. The purity of the race may have required this drastic measure but from a Christian point of view it seems cruel and inhuman.

The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt and dedicated. Ezra, the Priest, brought the law before the congregation, both men and *women.* The reading of the law before this great assembly was followed by a renewal of the covenant. It was a very notable occasion. The men, their *wives,* their sons and their *daughters* entered into an oath to walk in God's law, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord and his judgments and his statutes. This was permitted by their Persian rulers.

The Women of The Maccabees

Daniel—Maccabees

The Persian oppression was followed by the rule of Alexander the Great. On his death his realm was apportioned among four of his generals. The rival claims of the Greek rulers of Syria and Egypt placed Palestine as a bone of contention between their armies.

The visions of Daniel tell in veiled language of the persecutions of the Greek ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes. The books of the Maccabees give fuller accounts.

Antiochus went up against Israel and Jerusalem. He entered proudly into the sanctuary and despoiled it. He also made a great massacre. Therefore, there was great mourning in Israel. The virgins and young men were made feeble, and the beauty of women was changed. Again Greek armies fell suddenly upon the city and burned it with fire. Women and children were taken captive. The

city was made a habitation of strangers and her own children left her.

It was decreed that all Jews must not only renounce their own religion but must embrace the religion of their conquerors. They must sacrifice before the altars, groves, and chapels of idols. Their conquerors polluted the sanctuary and set up the idol altar upon the altar of God. Whosoever refused to worship the abomination of desolation was put to death.

They put to death certain women and hanged their infants. Howbeit many were fully resolved and confirmed not to profane their holy covenant, choosing rather to die.

The Priest Mattathias and his five sons known as the Maccabees rose in revolt. Judas Maccabeus (the hammerer) was their leader. His strong resistance and great victories are a tribute to the spirit of the fathers and mothers of Israel at this time.

Rome soon conquered all the Eastern World including Palestine. Part of the old temple wall has become the wailing place of the Jews where they still resort to mourn over their sins and their misfortunes and to implore the mercy of the God of their Fathers.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Anna, the wife of Tobit, is an important character in the Apocryphal book of that name. Her son, Tobias, is married to a kinswoman, *Sara. Edna,* the mother of Sara, is also one of the characters of the story.

The Apocrypha also relates the story of *Susanna.* They were women of Israel in exile.

In the book of Job three daughters, *Jemimah, Keziah* and *Keren-happuch,* are described. "In all the land were no women found so fair, and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren."

The *wife of Job*, in the midst of his afflictions, reveals a cruel disposition and a lack of sympathy when she asks, "Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Renounce God, and die."

But he said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

TYPES OF WOMEN

In concluding the study of the women of the Old Testament we find that they include representatives of Canaan and of all near nations from the Tigris to the Nile and back again to Persia; and from Lebanon and Tyre to Southern Arabia.

Such diversity of background adds interest to their characteristics. The Prophets have presented various types of women. Isaiah rebukes the *idle*. Hosea gives a warning from the *unfaithful* wife. The proverbs reprove the *strange* woman, who ensnares young men to their ruin and extols the *industrious* woman, who looketh well to the ways of her household. Wisdom is personified as a woman. Length of days, riches, and honor are found with her. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace."

Part Two

WOMEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction

While the women mentioned in the New Testament are few in number they occupy a place of tremendous importance in the progress of womanhood. Probably neither they nor their contemporaries had any conception of the revolutionizing effect of the Gospel messages upon the lives of women.

It is an honor to womanhood that contrasting with the blindness of many men, there was found among women appreciation and welcome for the new message and its messengers.

They may be studied in two periods:

Period I—The Beginnings of Faith

Period II—The Early Church

PERIOD I—BEGINNINGS OF FAITH

FIRST FRIENDS OF JESUS

MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is first presented to us at her home in Nazareth where she received the Salutation of Gabriel foretelling the birth of her son. Can anyone hear the beautiful "Ave Maria," hear the angel's words, "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee," and Mary's response, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord be it unto me according to Thy word" without seeing the heavenly vision in imagination?

Mary's journey on the back of a small beast of burden, among a caravan train over the eighty miles to the home of her cousin Elizabeth in Hebron of Judea can be easily visualized, as well as Elizabeth's joyous welcome.

In their expectancy of motherhood Mary and Elizabeth then spent about three months together in joyous anticipation and preparation for the coming events. Mary's song, called the "Magnificat" from the opening words, "My Soul doth magnify the Lord," expresses her feelings at this time, and recalls Hannah's song of thanksgiving over the birth of her son Samuel. There are five such immortal sacred lyrics inspired by the birth of Jesus and John.

About the time of the birth of Elizabeth's son, Mary returned to Nazareth. Mary and Joseph, her husband, journeyed together from Nazareth to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. In "Ben Hur, a Tale of the Christ" the author has vividly pictured the journey, the traffic about Jerusalem, and the gate, the well, and the manger at Bethlehem. To tell all of the incidents so vitally affecting Mary would be to recount the life of Jesus. She is a cen-

tral figure in the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the visit of the Wise Men, the Flight into Egypt, and the Return to Nazareth.

Memories of Mary cluster about the well of Nazareth. It was visited daily especially by women and children. It is revered because of the certainty of its being a location often visited by Mary and Jesus.

The home life in Nazareth, the journey to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years of age, and some of the events of the beginning of his ministry give glimpses of his mother. There are few references to the home, the parents or the brothers of Jesus during his active ministry, although after his death his brother James, surnamed "the Just," became an important leader of the early Church.

During these trying years of growing opposition to Jesus, culminating in the events of Passion week, we can only imagine the heartbreaking anxiety of Mary. As the passover drew near she came with the devoted band of women friends from Galilee to Bethany to minister unto Jesus. This was just before his last hours with his disciples in the upper room, preceding Gethsemane and his arrest.

These scenes and those of the Crucifixion are vividly pictured in art and portrayed in the Passion Play.

Jesus taking farewell of his mother, is followed by her view of him as he sinks beneath his cross on the Sorrowful Way. She stands beneath the cross, is given into the care of John, the beloved, and receives the body of the dead Christ. While almost in a swooning condition she is taken to a friendly home assisted and upheld by John and his mother Salome. The last record of her is in the gathering of the first believers praying in the upper room after the Ascension. It was truly foretold of her by St. Simeon that a sword should pierce her soul. Trustful sub-

mission to God's will sustained her, as it did her honored son. She is the great exponent of mother love, the great Madonna.

ELIZABETH OF HEBRON

Elizabeth was Mary's cousin. There are many interesting incidents told of her home life in the Judean Hills. Her husband was the priest Zacharias. They had no child to be company for Elizabeth when Zacharias was away in Jerusalem doing his appointed service in the Temple. She probably gave careful attention to the priest's vestments in preparation for his leaving and to all the home duties that would contribute to his happiness when he should return.

The promise of the birth of a son was given to Zacharias in a vision in the Temple. It brought great joy to these worthy people, whom we are told were righteous and blameless. As was foretold by Gabriel, Zacharias was dumb, but Elizabeth's joy found expression in humility and a spirit of reverent responsibility. In trying to visualize Mary's visit to her cousin we may enter into the intimacies of the home, and in listening to the eager conversation of the women we may fail to notice that Zacharias has nothing to say. After about three months Mary returned to her home. As predicted by the angel, Elizabeth's son was born. The neighbors and kinsfolk rejoiced with the parents.

It was and still is customary in Jewish families to have a great gathering of the relatives on the eighth day when the child is circumsized and named. There was the usual party and the usual difficulty in naming their baby, that of satisfying all the kinsfolk on both sides with the child's name, John, the name announced by Gabriel when he foretold the mission of John, "to prepare a people for the Lord; to turn the hearts of the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just."

When Zacharias recovered his speech his emotion expressed itself in a great lyrical outburst which we hear sung as the "Benedictus." The first part expresses praise and adoration to God, the last part tells very beautifully the mission of John. He was to give knowledge of the day-spring about to shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

"The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." We do not know how long these parents were spared to share the experiences of their son. He had noble traits of character which must have been noticeable while he was yet a child. May it not be assumed that they were transmitted from his parents? We hope Elizabeth lived to know about and to rejoice in the success of John's early ministry; to know that his good tidings were reaching beyond Palestine and turning many to repentance.

John's tribute to Jesus as one mightier than he and his beautiful spirit of renunciation when he said, "He must increase but I must decrease," are a reminder of the spirit of his mother.

John's conflict with Herod due to Herodias, his long imprisonment and his death demanded by Salome may have been preceded by the death of his parents as they are not mentioned after John's childhood. John has been commemorated in architecture by many baptistries and in beautiful paintings. Murillo's picture of the child John with a light cross of branches, and a lamb is very well known and very beautiful.

We hope Elizabeth knew of his triumphs and was spared the knowledge of his cruel fate. She should be held in high honor as one worthy in herself, and also as one exalted among women by being the mother and inspirer of John, the Baptiser. Even his enemy Herod said of him that he

was a righteous and holy man. Jesus said of him "A Prophet? Yea, and much more than a Prophet. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John, the Baptist."

ANNA OF JERUSALEM

The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem occurred when he was about three weeks old and is always associated with Anna the prophetess and Saint Simeon.

The parents took the little baby from Bethlehem, a journey of about five miles. Mary probably rode carrying the babe in her arms while Joseph led the ass. We may know the landmarks of the highway for many of them (such as Rachel's tomb, which was then thousands of years old) remain to our day. As this would be Mary's first appearance in public with the baby, her young mother heart would be fluttering first with joy and pride and then with an anxious feeling of responsibility. We would like to visualize every part of the journey, as Joseph led his dear ones through the traffic of the busy Jaffa gate and traversed the narrow steep streets of the City up to the Temple.

This entrance into the Courts of the Temple, was Jesus' first visit to his father's house. In the Court of the women they were met by Anna the Prophetess. Except from tradition we know little about her. She was a widow of a great age who spent her time in the temple worshipping with fastings and prayer. "Coming up at that very hour she took notice of the baby and gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."

St. Simeon also spoke precious words of prophecy about Jesus. His words inspired the last of the lyrics which is called the "Nunc Demittis," "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation pre-

pared for all peoples; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

The remembrance of these first friends and their comforting words were a joy for Mary to recall, and she kept all these things and pondered them in her heart, while taking refuge from Herod in Egypt, and after the family returned to Nazareth.

The First Messenger

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

In the early ministry of Jesus, he left Judea and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs pass through Samaria. He came to Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph, and Jacob's well was there. Jesus being wearied with his journey sat thus by the well, when a degraded Samaritan woman came to draw water just as she had come on every other day. She would glance carelessly at the weary traveler without a thought that this was to be a day of days for her, a turning point in her whole life. She could never have imagined that one so unworthy as herself should become the bearer of a great message to the world.

Her ancestry is interesting. She spoke of Jacob as "our father, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons and his cattle." One never wearies of the story of Jacob's well. It is one of the certain locations shown to this day. Jesus and the Samaritan woman have immortalized it for all time. The beginning of its history is told in Genesis 33: 18 when Jacob bought the parcel of ground and in Genesis 48: 21 when on his death bed he gave it to Joseph and his descendants forever.

How the Samaritans came to have a mixed origin is told in the history of the fall of the Northern Kingdom. II Kings 17. The King of Assyria having conquered Israel, took many of the inhabitants away into captivity. He also

brought people from distant foreign provinces and placed them in possession of the lands and cities of Israel. The mixed race resulting being partly Jewish and partly heathen was despised by Jews of pure ancestry.

In Ezra 4 we read of their rebuff when they came asking the privilege of helping in rebuilding the temple of the Lord. They said, "Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do, and we do sacrifices unto him since the days of Esar-haddon King of Assyria, which brought us up hither." The heads of Israel said unto them, "Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God."

The resulting animosity was of more than five hundred years duration when Jesus showed a friendly attitude toward the Samaritan woman in asking her for a drink of water. Her thoughts were about the sordid things of life. She must have seemed an unpromising person, to try to interest in spiritual things, but Jesus spoke to her of the soul's thirst and the living water. He explained to her the inner meaning of worship, "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

This was one of the earliest declarations of the wideness of the gospel message. It was spoken to a woman of bad reputation and of a despised race, thus giving great emphasis to the idea of the universal fatherhood of God, and the universal sisterhood of women.

This unnamed woman felt the power of Jesus' personality; she welcomed his message; she proclaimed it to others; she became his friend. Jesus abode among the Samaritans two days. Many believed and called him the Savior of the world.

The present day Samaritans in Palestine are a small declining group. They worship at Mt. Gerezim, the sacred mountain of which the woman spoke to Jesus. They are a living reminder of the teaching of Jesus that race prejudice

is sinful. Since the world war this lesson is being realized as the basis of world peace.

Women of Galilee

THE OTHER MARY OF NAZARETH

"Oh Galilee, sweet Galilee, where Jesus loved so much to be!" Almost all of the life of Jesus was spent in the two cities, Nazareth among the hills, and Capernaum on the sea shore. These places were about twenty miles apart. In these two cities and in a few small towns near them, Jesus had a band of very loyal women friends.

From lack of sufficient information it is impossible to declare definitely the identity of each one. It is disconcerting after following a line of conjecture to a seemingly reasonable conclusion to find that another authority has arrived at a different opinion. However uncertain some of the facts may be, there is sufficient evidence of individual characteristics shown in acts of loving devotion.

A life-long friend of Jesus and his mother was the other Mary. It is assumed that she lived in Nazareth near the home of Joseph. She is referred to as the wife of Alphaeus (Clopas) and as the mother of James, "the Little" or the less and Joses (Joseph.) Her children may have been included among those mentioned as brothers and sisters of Jesus. The scriptures contain other examples of the word brethren being used to indicate near kindred.

This Mary, whether of kindred or not, was a devoted life-long friend of Jesus and his mother. According to modern usage she might reasonably be called his "Aunt Mary." This would not only distinguish her from others of the same name, but would emphasize her nearness in proximity and in spirit through evil and good report. She was to Mary a sister in word and deed. She probably knew more about Jesus than any other person did except his parents. When children grow up and work and play

with neighbors' children their mothers become familiar with all their traits of character.

She expressed her love by her constant presence and ministration during the sufferings of Passion week. She came with the women from Galilee, to Jerusalem and Bethany, she witnessed the Crucifixion and was one of the two women who beheld the tomb and how his body was laid. She was one of those who came to the empty tomb having prepared spices and ointments, and heard the message, "All hail, fear not; go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

The home of Alphaeus and Mary must have been honored by the frequent presence of Jesus. She may have been the mother of Matthew, the Apostle and Evangelist, as his father's name was Alphaeus. We know that the parents and two sons believed on Jesus. One, James, "the Little" became an Apostle. Thus it becomes evident that the mother was a woman of strong influence in her home.

There were times when Jesus' own brothers believed not on him. How comforting must have been the unswerving confidence of this Mary and her family. She is an example of sisterly solicitude.

Women of Capernaum

Leaving Nazareth Jesus came and dwelt in Capernaum which then became the center of his ministry as long as any place could be so called. It was the principal place in the province, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, or Lake of Gennesaret. This so-called sea is really an inland lake caused by an expansion of the Jordan river which flows through it. The shores are hilly and very beautiful.

Jesus chose this important location from which he and his disciples went forth on tours. Jerusalem was the center of the opposition, where Jesus was a transient teacher, but

he was a citizen of Capernaum. Here he spent the happiest time of his brief public life. His fellow towns people have a great distinction, especially those who welcomed him in their homes, and remained faithful to his teachings when opposition and persecution drew sharp lines of division in many families.

On the supposed site of Capernaum nothing remains but ruins. From the records we can make an imaginary restoration of the city. The central portion near the lake shore would contain boat landings, a fish market, a produce market, the Custom House, and an official residence for Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee. Herod's steward, Chuzas and his wife Joanna, are mentioned. On the sloping hills the Jewish and Roman quarters would have distinctive features.

In the Jewish quarter Jesus probably lived with Peter, whose wife and her mother ministered unto many believers. The Synagogue would be an important Jewish building. The home of its ruler, Jairus, would be nearby. His wife and daughter would be honored in the community. Levi the tax gatherer (afterward known as Matthew the Apostle, and Evangelist) entertained Jesus in his home with publicans and sinners. Simon, the Pharisee, gave a supper for Jesus, out of curiosity, but neglected to provide the usual courtesy of supplying water for the tired feet of the wayfarer. Sandals were worn and slipped off at the door where water was usually provided for a refreshing dip for the feet.

It was at this supper that the woman who was a sinner came behind the couch where Jesus was reclining, and wept. Her repentant tears fell upon his feet and she wiped them away with her hair and anointed his feet. This courtesy was not unusual. Her name is not recorded. She is erroneously called the "Magdalene" and has been confused with two other women (to be noted later) neither of whom lived in Capernaum. The mistake has been so

perpetuated in music, art, and literature that it probably will never be corrected.

In the Roman quarter the home of the nobleman whose son Jesus restored, would be an imposing building. The Roman centurion would have a home near barracks and dining halls for one hundred or more Roman soldiers. This Roman officer must have been a man of rare human sympathy. He had a servant who was dear unto him, who was sick and at the point of death. When the centurion heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews asking him that he would come and save his servant. And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our Synagogue." He showed his modesty when he said to Jeeus, "Lord trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus said, "Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

From all these homes came the women of Capernaum to the fish markets by the lake, to the produce markets where they bargained for their meat, grain, vegetables, and fruit, while the men were more numerous about the boat landings and the Custom House. Jesus came and went among them as one of them. When they wearied of his spiritual messages and "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him" there remained besides the Apostles many of his staunchest friends among the women of Capernaum. "Woe unto thee, Capernaum" said Jesus in sorrow of heart over those whose high privileges did not prevent their rejection of his message. But when all had left the Synagogue but the Apostles Jesus asked them, "Would ye also go away?" And they answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Salome of Bethsaida

In a charming suburb of Capernaum called Bethsaida were homes of fishermen. They were on the bank of a small stream emptying into the sea of Galilee just above Capernaum, making an advantageous location for owners of boats.

From this fishing community five of the twelve apostles came. They were Simon Peter and Andrew, his brother, sons of Jonas; Philip; James and John, sons of Zebedee and Salome. Nothing is recorded of Philip's home. The name of the mother of Peter and Andrew is not told. Peter was married and lived in Capernaum. As Peter, James, and John formed the inner circle among the Apostles, Jesus must have been intimately acquainted with their parents and their homes.

Salome has a distinctive personality. Efficiency was probably her chief characteristic. Among the women she apparently was a leader, and originated plans for action. It is supposed that she was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. With her sons committed to this new teaching, Salome had much at stake and with her temperament for going ahead and getting things done she probably had a large share in promoting the Kingdom.

When her sons were going out on tours with Jesus she probably gave advice and attended to their material needs and went herself on some occasions. Zebedee had servants who are mentioned as attending to duties with the fishing boats, so Salome had a prosperous family to serve. Her zeal for the advantage of her sons caused her to make an appeal to Jesus in their behalf. She came worshipping with James and John and asked saying, "Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom."

Jesus said, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said unto

him, "We are able." Jesus said, "The cup that I drink ye shall drink; but to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give." From this incident came the precious teaching of Jesus, "Ye know that they who rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all."

By this test of service Salome and her sons were among the first and greatest. At the crucifixion Salome and John stood at the foot of the cross. Jesus gave to John the precious legacy of the care of his mother. A realistic painting by Schmalz called the "Return from Calvary" shows John and Salome assisting Mary to the doorway of a friendly retreat. Salome was with the other woman seeking Jesus on the Resurrection morning.

Salome's son James was put to death by Herod, becoming, with Stephen, one of the first two Christian martyrs. Her son John was the beloved disciple, the one who most perfectly apprehended the spirit of Christ. He lived to a great age and wrote the first Epistle of John and the precious Gospel of the Soul of Jesus, the Gospel of God's Love.

One is reminded of Lincoln's tribute to the mother who gave five sons to the cause of freedom. Salome has the honor of having given two noble sons who became unrivaled servants of Christ Jesus her Lord.

Mary of Magdala

Magdala was a town situated at about the center of the west shore of the Sea, or Lake of Galilee. Here lived a woman known as Mary of Magdala who was possessed of evil spirits. Her case must have been one of unusual severity, as it is described by the use of the term seven devils.

Seven seems to have been a number used to express fullness or completeness.

This woman, tortured by a prolonged and terrifying mental obsession, was restored to her right mind by the healing power of the Great Physician. Her gratitude seems to have been in proportion to the greatness of her cure. She seems to have been a woman of importance and of means. She is mentioned first among the women of the band who toured the province of Galilee with Jesus and the twelve Apostles ministering unto them of their substance.

Mary Magdalene has been confused with the sinful repentant woman of Capernaum who anointed Jesus at the supper given by Simon, the Pharisee, during the second year of the ministry. She has also been confused with Mary of Bethany, near Jerusalem, the sister of Martha and Lazarus who near the close of his ministry anointed Jesus at the supper given by Simon the leper. There is no authority for either of these identifications.

Literature and art are replete with poems and pictures representing the fallen woman forgiven and saved by the gospel of love. She is called Mary Magdalene. The pictures are characterized by physical beauty and by the abundance of beautiful hair. Longfellow in "The Divine Tragedy" has a poem entitled "The Tower of Magdala" which presents the woman as the reformed prostitute.

In the Passion Play at Oberammergau the sister of Lazarus is named Mary Magdalene. This unfortunate mistake was probably due to similarity of circumstances connected with the two suppers and uncertainty of chronology. Later research and the interwoven gospels in the book called "His Life" make the events and characters stand out clearly as different in time and place and motives.

Mary Magdalene is regularly mentioned with the women of Galilee who were with Jesus and his mother at the cross and tomb. When they left the place of crucifixion

the mother of Jesus was accompanied and supported by Salome and her son John, while Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained with the disciples until the body was prepared for burial. They are named as sitting over against the sepulcher whence they beheld the tomb and how his body was laid.

A noted painting called "the two Marys at the Tomb" invariably calls forth the question, "Which one is the Mother?" It is to be noted that Jesus' mother was not there. She had probably suffered all that a mother's heart could endure when she embraced the dead body of her dear son.

Michael Angelo's statue called "La Pieta" in the Cathedral of St. Peter's at Rome presents this scene in imperishable Cararra marble. It is one of his masterpieces.

Among the women who, having prepared the spices, came early to the tomb and found it empty, Mary Magdalene has highest honors. She was the first to receive a message from the risen Lord and to hold converse with him.

Jesus saith unto her "Woman, why weepest thou?" He gave her a commission to go and tell others. "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and my God and your God." She was the first missionary of the risen Christ.

The Ministering Band

When Jesus had removed from Nazareth to Capernaum he began to go about through the cities and villages of Galilee preaching the Kingdom. On the first tour he took with him his first four followers Peter and Andrew, James and John.

The mountain known as the Horns of Hattin was a short distance west of Magdala. Here eager crowds of people listened to the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus appointed the Twelve Apostles. Soon afterward these twelve men accompanied Jesus on what is known as the second tour.

Luke is the only evangelist who records that certain women went with them to minister unto them. Luke, the beloved Gentile physician gives many items especially about women and children which are not told by any one else.

These women are known as the Ministering Band. Mary Magdalene is named first and Joanna the wife of Chuzas, Herod's steward, and Susanna are mentioned, and many others who prepared and provided from their stores of food and clothing the things needful for the health and comfort of the touring party.

It will not require a great stretch of the imagination to determine who some of the others must have been. Salome would be alert to do all possible for her two sons, James and John. The other Mary is presumed to have been the mother of James, "the Little" and perhaps of Matthew and would be personally interested.

Besides the women of Capernaum already mentioned such as the wife of Peter and her mother, the wife of Jairus, and the wife of the nobleman, and the wife of the Centurion, there would be the suffering woman cured of a long-standing affliction, the widow of Nain, and the hostess of Cana who gave the wedding feast. She may have been related to Bartholomew (Nathaniel) who was an Apostle and also of Cana.

All honor to these women who united their efforts to make their love and service effective, we may call them the first Women's Aid Society and may imagine Mary Magdalene as President and Salome as General Manager and Director. They found a pathway of service for all the future Women's Missionary Societies. They were inspired by love of Jesus and his example of love to men and women everywhere. They ministered because their hearts responded to his love.

Friends of Bethany and Jerusalem

Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus

On the third tour through Galilee Jesus came to Nazareth on a visit to his home. It should be remembered, in trying to realize the brief joy of this reunion with his parents, his brothers and sisters, who are also mentioned, that this was his last happy meeting with them. The families of the two Marys are probably collectively referred to as the brothers and sisters of Jesus. This visit closed the popular and happy period of Jesus' ministry. He was rejected in Nazareth, and shortly afterward he was rejected in Capernaum also, and then began his withdrawal to out-of-the-way places where he could instruct his disciples and avoid his enemies.

From the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn, to the Great Passover in the spring, Jesus carried on an alternating ministry; first attending a feast and preaching in and around Jerusalem to hostile hearers; then withdrawing to Perea on the east side of the Jordan, where he spoke to friendly hearers. Some of his most precious teachings, of universal application, such as the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son were given to eager listeners in Perea. This was the time when he was homeless. He described his state by saying, "The son of man hath not where to lay his head." The end was near. His heart was grieved because of the rejection of his message by his former friends, and his thoughts were upon "his decease which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem."

He came to Bethany which was a village on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem. Here "a certain woman named Martha received him into her house." Her sister Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word." Luke is the only evangelist who tells of this visit and its intimate details. The contrasting characters of the sisters are briefly but

clearly indicated; Martha, energetic and practical, Mary, contemplative and spiritual. Martha is supposed to have been the older. She probably was a widow, and the manager of the home. She was "cumbered about much serving." In this she was the prototype of many generations of women. She was irritated and complained because Mary was leaving her to serve alone.

When Jesus made his gentle answer he was lovingly saying to all women everywhere that there is a spirit as well as a body to be sustained. He said, "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Lazarus was the brother of Martha and Mary. When he was sick his sisters sent word to Jesus saying, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." The wording of this message shows that Jesus had found responsive hearts in this friendly home. He came to them and finding the sisters grieving over their brother's death, it is recorded that, "Jesus wept."

The raising of Lazarus is one of the great events of the late ministry. It established the love and loyalty of this household. Going up to Jerusalem to the great and last Passover, Jesus came to Bethany. They made him a supper there in the house of Simon, the leper; and Martha served; but Lazarus sat at meat. In the Passion Play at Oberammergau Simon is represented as the father of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. He was evidently either their father or a neighbor. He had probably been cured of leprosy and was expressing gratitude in providing the feast. Mary anointed Jesus with precious ointment. Judas wished to have her reproved for extravagance. Jesus said, "She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying."

The tragic events of his last week followed in rapid succession. This dear home in Bethany was a haven of rest

for Jesus after each trying day. It is written "at eventide he went out unto Bethany with the twelve." And again, "He went forth out of the city to Bethany and lodged there." And there came certain women out of Galilee and ministered unto him. We know that with his mother came the other Mary, Salome, and Mary of Magdala. In the Passion Play they arrive and are welcomed by Simon and his family. Here Jesus spoke his last farewell to his mother. The priests had taken counsel how they might put Lazarus to death, so it is probable that the friends of Jesus incurred grave danger in receiving him. The self-sacrificing devotion of Christ's followers can only be accounted for by his loving personality. All women take comfort in these loyal women friends of Jesus. He himself said of one of them that wheresoever the gospel should be preached throughout the whole world her devotion should be spoken of for a memorial of her.

Daughters of Jerusalem

Jesus, having said farewell to his friends in Bethany on Thursday of his last week, left that temporary shelter for the last time. When he did not return as usual the forebodings of his friends turned into a certitude of fear for his safety. His last supper, conversation, words of admonition and consolation with his disciples, were given in the upper room in the house of some daughter of Jerusalem, who believed on him. Probably it was the home of Mary, the mother of Mark.

When he had spoken his great intercessory prayer for his disciples and all who should believe, they sang a hymn and went out. There followed the agony in the garden, the desertion by his disciples, and his arrest, which was witnessed by an unnamed young man thought to have been Mark.

The first hour corresponded to our six o'clock. The

events of the first three hours of Friday, the great day of sorrow, included the Jewish and Roman trials; Pilate's efforts to release the prisoner; the warning message of *Pilate's wife;* the choice of Barrabas; the condemnation; and the carrying of the Cross to the place of execution. The way by which Jesus passed from Pilate's judgment hall to the place of crucifixion is called the Via Dolorosa or Sorrowful Way. It is the most famous street in the world. Although there may be doubt as to the correct locations along this "Way of Sorrow" there is no doubt about the reality of the sufferings endured. The women friends seeking Jesus advanced into the street which was filled with the roar of a clamoring murderous mob. Mary saw the form of one advancing, sinking beneath the weight of the heavy Cross. She cried, "it is, it is my Jesus." A guard pushed her back and drove the prisoner on while the women wailed and tried to succor one another.

At another Station of the Cross another group of women of Jerusalem rushed forward from the house of one of their number and regarded the prisoner with loving pity. Tradition gives one of them the name of Veronica and records an act of mercy which expressed the love of all the group. Seeing the blood and sweat disfiguring the Saviour's face she took the fine white linen fabric which covered her head and wiped his face. Veronica has been commemorated in architecture and painting, especially in churches in Spain and Mexico. Her emblem is a handkerchief or veil bearing the portrait of the thorn-crowned head and face of Jesus.

There followed Jesus, a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. Among them may have been the widow who cast her two mites into the treasury and was commended by Jesus because she had given all her living; and the accused woman who escaped a sentence of death by stoning, because no guiltless one was

found to cast the first stone; the mother of the blind son whose sight was restored, (whose parents feared the Jews lest they should be put out of the Synagogue) may have found courage to join his friends.

Jesus turning unto them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Throughout his deepest agony of suffering his thoughts were all for others.

From the third until the ninth hour, corresponding with, from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, Jesus hung upon the Cross. Among the people who stood beholding and hearing his last words were many daughters of Jerusalem, not named but very real friends and followers. His first three words were all of others: "Father, forgive them; Today in Paradise; behold thy mother." These were the last words while the sufferer was in full possession of all his powers.

After three hours of darkness came the bitter cry of anguish "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and then his last expiring words; "I thirst; it is finished; Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And he gave up the ghost.

Multitudes came together at this sight. Many women were there beholding from afar. They returned smiting their breasts. They had looked on him whose life and death were to be the Salvation of the World.

The daughters of Jerusalem who were witnesses of these things were probably among those eye-witnesses from whom Luke received the testimony for his gospel. They loved to tell the story of Jesus and his love.

WOMEN OF THE HOMELAND

Mary of Jerusalem, the Mother of Mark

Among the women friends of Jesus, who lived in Jerusalem, Mary is the best known. Undoubtedly other homes became meeting places for the followers of the new way, as it was called, but hers is the only home designated by its owner's name. Acts 12: 12.

Jesus had charged the Apostles to depart not from Jerusalem but to tarry in the city, awaiting the promised power from on high. They gladly accepted the hospitality of the believers, in Jerusalem. When the Apostles returned to Jerusalem from the ascension on the Mount of Olives they met "in the upper chamber *where they were abiding.* Here they continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Among the women we should without doubt find Mark's mother, Mary.

For five or more years the growth of the new faith was centered in Jerusalem. Peter was the leader; Mark became his devoted friend, as later events disclose. And his mother would certainly be interested in the cause to which Mark's cousin Barnabas (Col. 4:10) was devoting his wisdom, service, and property. Mary was the aunt of Barnabas, (Col. 4: 10) whose wisdom, service, and property were devoted to the cause.

Barnabas rendered a great service in getting Paul recognized in Jerusalem and in Antioch. Barnabas was from the island of Cyprus and may have known Paul when he was Saul, of Tarsus. They may have journeyed together going up to Jerusalem in earlier days. Barnabas would almost certainly go to the home of his aunt Mary and take

Paul with him and thus introduce Paul to her, and we may think of her as one of his most devoted friends. It is reasonable to assume that the home of Mary and Mark was the chief meeting place for believers. Mary would know of all the work being done. When the rulers began persecutions she would be intensely interested.

When Peter and John were arrested, and after being threatened with punishment, were allowed to go, they came to their own company and reported the threats. The company of men and women lifted up their voices to God with one accord, saying, "Lord, look upon their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness." They did not ask to be excused from testifying, but only for strength to withstand threats. May we not rightly assume that Mary's voice was one of those thus praying?

Barnabas having a field, sold it, and gave the money to the Apostles. Many others probably did likewise. Others, like Mary, served the cause with hospitality and ministrations. The story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira who kept back part of the price of possessions when they were claiming to have given all, shows that all were not equally sincere.

It is recorded that there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. All the problems of management would enter closely into the life of Mary. Probably she was intimately acquainted with Stephen and his arguments for a wider vision of the Gospel.

The stoning of Stephen was followed by a great persecution and by a great scattering of believers. Herod put forth his hand to afflict the Church. He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword, and seized and imprisoned Peter. But prayer was made earnestly of the Church for him. Being delivered miraculously from prison, Peter,

left to himself, considered where he should go for refuge. It is significant that he came to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together praying. He was so well known there that the maid, Rhoda, recognized his voice and opened not the gate for joy, but ran in and told that Peter stood before the gate.

They were so very human in being so surprised when their prayers were answered that Peter had to caution them to silence while he hastened to make his escape. It is evident that Mary was a great help to the Church in Jerusalem.

Her nephew Barnabas and her son Mark were Paul's companions on the first missionary journey. Later Barnabas and Mark toured the island of Cyprus. Still later Mark associated himself with Peter as a fellow worker and scribe, and Mark's gospel is a written record of Peter's recollections of the Lord. Perhaps it was his mother's faith, knowledge, and influence to which we are largely indebted for Mark's work.

How is it possible to overestimate the service of Mary, and other unnamed women of Jerusalem, during the first trying years of the Christian faith, struggling for existence? Many suffered death for their loyalty. Mary was one of those who never faltered.

Dorcas of Joppa must have become a convert to Christianity under circumstances like the following:

They that were scattered abroad by the persecution against the Church in Jerusalem went about preaching the word. Peter and Philip, the evangelist (not the Apostle), whose home was in Caesarea, made many converts in Samaria and Judea. Philip started the gospel on its way to Africa by explaining it to a man of great authority under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who after being baptised, went on his way rejoicing; while Philip returned to his home in Caesarea.

Peter went through the cities of western Judea. At Lydda he was sent for to come to Joppa where friends were lamenting the death of Dorcas (Tabitha), a woman full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. All the widows stood by weeping and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. It is recorded that Peter raised her up, and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

The name of Dorcas has been a favorite one for women's sewing societies as it honors needle work and shows an avenue of service to women. In all lands sewing is a necessary and useful occupation for women. The notable thing about Dorcas was that she employed her talent to help the poor.

There are other interesting events to be told about Joppa, the home of Simon the tanner, where on account of Dorcas, many believed on the Lord.

The Daughters of Philip

Some consideration of the progress of Christianity in Caesarea seemed necessary as an introduction to Philip's four daughters.

Caesarea was the headquarters of the Roman Administration of Palestine. Cornelius who was stationed there with a band of Italian soldiers became, through the preaching of Peter, a very notable convert to the new faith, which had not at that time received a name. Cornelius is described as a devout man who feared God, gave alms, and prayed. His conversion was notable not only on account of his high office and noble character but because it was the beginning of faith among the Gentiles.

Peter, in accepting the call to preach in Caesarea said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." When he reported

the amazing result to the church in Jerusalem they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

Philip, the Evangelist, lived with his family in Caesarea, and being an evangelist and fellow worker with Peter would naturally bring into his home understanding of, and sympathy with, the expanding vision of the Apostles. His daughters seem to have caught the spirit.

The first missionary efforts of Barnabas and Paul were far removed from Caesarea and do not concern the family of Philip. But we may be certain that the dangers encountered by Paul's return from the third missionary journey aroused intense sympathy in Philip's household. Luke has given touching details of the farewell words spoken to his followers from Ephesus and Miletus. On the journey they had tarried seven days at Tyre while the ship was unloading her cargo. The disciples said to Paul that he should not set foot in Jerusalem, but the journey was continued. Luke evidently was with Paul. He described the company as kneeling down on the beach and mingling prayers and tears with their words of farewell.

Coming then to Caesarea, they entered into the house of Philip, the evangelist, and abode with him. "Now this man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." Paul and Luke were honored guests. They tarried there many days, hearing the warnings and predictions by which all present besought them not to go up to Jerusalem. Paul answered, "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not to be bound only but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Paul was arrested in Jerusalem. To rescue him from mob violence and plots against his life, revealed by Paul's sister's son, he was sent under guard to Caesarea and placed in charge of the Roman officer Felix. Paul and

Luke remained in Caesarea for four years. Paul was a prisoner but it is probable that he was allowed to see his friends. Philip and his daughters would be frequent visitors. They may have heard his plea before Agrippa.

Luke was at liberty and it was probably at this time that he collected evidence from eye witnesses as material for his Gospel and the Book of Acts. He may have written parts of it in the house of Philip. Philip and Stephen had been two of the seven deacons administering the affairs of the early Church of Jersusalem at the time of the martyrdom of Stephen.

The daughters of Philip seem to have had the honor of knowing and working for and with some of the greatest people of their time. They also were deserving of honor, as in their day it was a rare thing for women to be recognized as prophets.

WOMEN OF THE DISPERSION

Lydia, Business Woman of Philippi

The growth of the Early Church from 30 to 40 A. D. was centered in Jerusalem; from 40 to 50 A. D. there was a new center among Gentiles at Antioch. Here the disciples were first called Christians. From this Church Paul and Barnabas first started missions. From 50 to 60 A. D. a very important work was carried on around the Aegan Sea; at Ephesus, on the East; at Philippi, on the North; and at Corinth, on the West. From 60 to 70 A. D. the expansion had reached Rome.

During the third of these decades Paul spent about one and a half years at Corinth and about two and one-half years at Ephesus. All of his letters were written either from this field or to the Christians in the immediate vicinity. It is the field of his most strenuous endeavors. Lydia was engaged in business in Philippi when Paul, Silas, and

Luke first brought the gospel into Europe. She was a seller of purple from Thyatira, a small place in western Asia Minor. The coast provinces were known as Little Asia, or were frequently simply called Asia.

Lydia was a proselyte, or convert to Judaism. This fact would incline her to be in sympathy with the Gentile mission. Philippi was an important city in Macedonia. The population was largely Greek, but it was also a free Roman City. When Paul heard the call, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," he decided to go first to Philippi. Luke, the beloved physician who was a Gentile, had perhaps lived in Philippi. He probably was able to assist Paul and Silas on their way.

They were accustomed to seek out first the Jewish Synagogue. Here they were told that the Jews having no synagogue were accustomed to hold meetings by a river outside the city gate. The missionaries found this place of prayer and "Spake unto the women which were come together." Lydia was a leader among them. She gave heed to Paul's message, accepted it with open heart and mind, and being baptised, she became the *first Christian Convert in Europe.* She constrained the travelers to come to her house and to abide there. Throughout all the strenuous opposition to the Christian message, Lydia allied herself and her household with its defenders.

Paul rescued a demented girl from men who were exploiting her for gain. He restored her to her right mind. He probably placed her in the care of Lydia. Her masters were furious over their loss. They had Paul and Silas dragged into the market place where they lodged a complaint against them. The magistrates had them stripped, beaten and cast into prison.

The earthquake, the conversion of the jailor, and the release of the prisoners which followed, must have caused great excitement. When the order was given "Let those

men go" Paul said, "Nay verily, they have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans" (referring to free Roman citizenship which was conferred upon cities, or individuals regardless of nationality), "let them come and bring us out."

After being released from prison, before leaving the city, they entered into the house of Lydia, and found comfort and assistance. Paul's letter to the Philippians is one of the most self-revealing of his writings. He thanks them for their "fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day even until now. Ye Philippians, know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only; having sent once and again unto my need."

We can name two Christian women of Philippi, Euodia and Synteche, who must have been intimate friends of Lydia, altho we must believe that they were much inferior to Lydia in character, as Paul chides them lest their variance should hinder their otherwise helpful labors in the gospel.

It is reasonable to discover Lydia as a prime mover in this furtherance of the gospel in Europe. She served with faith, wisdom, and enthusiasm.

Priscilla, the Teacher

When Paul and his companions, Silas, Luke, and Timothy were driven out of Philippi, and neighboring cities in Macedonia, they came to Athens, where Paul made some notable addresses to Greek philosophers, but there is no record of a church being formed there.

Paul went on to Corinth where he worked at his trade, that of tent making. He found a home with Priscilla and her husband Aquila. As she is usually mentioned first, she was probably the more active worker. Aquila was a

Jew, of the dispersion, a native of Pontus in Asia Minor. Priscilla (Prisca) may have been of Roman descent. They had lived in Rome. Christianity had found its way into Rome and had spread until it received unfavorable notice from the authorities. Christians were ordered by Claudius (A. D. 52) to leave Rome. Aquila and Priscilla obeyed the order and moved to Corinth. They were tent makers and Corinth was a great commercial city where there was a market for labor and produce.

Priscilla had Paul for a lodger and co-worker in tent making. She had this rare opportunity to learn the gospel message by close every-day companionship with Paul for several years. Paul worked at his trade and taught in the synagogue, until the opposition of the Jews drove him out. Another place was found for him, where he taught daily and many believed. Priscilla became a great teacher of the gospel, having had both public and private instruction from Paul himself.

Paul's letters to the Corinthians reveal the many problems and difficulties that arose in teaching Gentiles how to conduct a Christian Church. There were factions, quarreling, heathen practices, and gross ideas about the Lord's supper. These troubles called forth some of Paul's greatest Christian teachings. Priscilla learned all these things. On Paul's next missionary journey he began a work at Ephesus that lasted nearly three years. Aquila and Priscilla went with him, and established a Christian Church and school in their house. Probably Paul continued as a member of the family.

Apollos was the most distinguished pupil taught by Priscilla. He was a highly educated Jew from Alexandria, learned in the Hebrew scriptures and in Greek culture. He became an enthusiastic Christian and was very eloquent. It is recorded that being imperfectly taught in the things concerning Jesus he was taken into the home of

Aquila and Priscilla and there taught the way of God more carefully.

The authorship of the book of Hebrews has not been positively determined. It is of the purest Greek, shows profound knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, has sound reasoning leading up to eloquent appeals. Apollos has been thought to be the author, but there is also a surmise that it may have been written by Priscilla.

Paul taught in the synagogue of Ephesus for three months. Meeting hostility he departed to another building known as the school of Tyrannus. His work here continued for over two years. In all probability Priscilla and Aquila were assistant teachers in that school. When the worshippers of Diana created an uproar which drove Christians out of Ephesus Paul went to Macedonia, probably to the home of Lydia. Among the friends who would accompany or follow him to protect him and do services for him there, one would expect to find Apollos, Aquila, and Priscilla.

Second Corinthians, written from Macedonia after his rescue from the mob at Ephesus, expresses thanks for comfort in tribulations and suffering. Women like to think that Lydia and Priscilla united their efforts to strengthen their great leader in his hour of weakness. Aquila and Priscilla again visited Rome and returned to Ephesus. Their home was always a gathering place for Christians. When Timothy was placed in charge of the Church in Ephesus they were still active workers there. In Paul's last earthly message closing the second epistle to Timothy he sends his salutations to Prisca and Aquila. It makes Paul seem more human to know something about these friends with whom he made his home for about four years and whose friendship he cherished as long as he lived. Priscilla was honored among Christian women. To have companioned with Paul was a privilege and also

a responsibility. She seems to have attained to his high ideals.

Phoebe of Cenchrea

Phoebe is introduced by Paul as "our sister, a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." In a few brief sentences he gives a vivid picture of her service as a helper of many, and of Paul himself also. These words of commendation are found in the opening verses of the last chapter of the letter to the Romans, where Phoebe is designated as the bearer of the letter. There is reason for thinking that the first part of this chapter may have been an introduction to another letter, now lost, which was sent to Ephesus after Paul's hasty departure when his life was endangered by mob violence from worshipers of Diana. Whatever doubt there may be about the destination of the letter the statements about Phoebe remain clear and undisputed.

Cenchrea (or Cenchreal, R. V.) was at the southern harbor of Corinth, on the Saronic gulf about seven miles east of Corinth. It was a small village with the usual features of a port, with an endless movement of traffic and commerce between Corinth and the sea. It seems an unlikely place for a Christian church and there is no history of its origin.

How came Phoebe to hear the gospel story? Was it thru a chance meeting with Paul, or some of his converts? Or was it her privilege to have heard him preaching or teaching in Corinth? Since he found her to be so valuable a convert, it is reasonable to suppose that she was well acquainted with Priscilla and her husband while Paul made his home with them in Corinth. Phoebe would miss their companionship when they joined Paul in his new headquarters in Ephesus. Perhaps it was when Paul was cast out of Ephesus and came to Corinth that Phoebe was

able to render help to Paul and other refugees. Nothing would be more natural than that Paul should have need to communicate with Aquila and Priscilla in regard to his personal affairs and the interest of the church of Ephesus, so suddenly deprived of his presence. Needing a faithful, wise, and trusted messenger it would be natural that Phoebe should be chosen for this delicate mission. He asks "that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matters she hath need of you." He adds a greeting for Priscilla and Aquila, his helpers in Christ Jesus, "Who for my life laid down their own necks." Their joy in recovering Phoebe and the letter can be imagined.

It required an open mind, sincere conviction and courage to be a Christian among powerful pagans, to be a pillar of a little detached church and a succourer of the persecuted. Phoebe is probably a type of many whose service is very valuable, and passes unheralded. Reading between the lines we can recreate the coming and going of Phoebe. She lived in a time and place of great opportunity and was privileged to give helpful service to a great leader and a great cause. She has doubtless heard the enconium, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy God."

Lois the Grandmother, and Eunice the Mother of Timothy

Eunice was a young Jewish woman who was married to a Gentile husband. This was probably a matter of grave concern to her mother, Lois, as such a marriage usually is to older people, who see the danger of unhappiness from opposing ideals in parents, and the very great danger in the training of children. The parents may oppose each other, or may through indifference, neglect training especially in religious matters.

Eunice was left a widow with one son, Timothy. Lois gave her grandson very careful instructions in the Jewish religion, but he was not circumcised. Their home was at Lystra in southern Asia Minor. There was a temple near the city gate where gentile gods were worshipped.

Timothy was probably a youth when Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey came to Lystra. Luke gives a full record of events in and near Lystra at this time. He may have been present himself, or the eye witness whom he reports may have been Timothy.

The priests of the temple were ready to worship the bearers of the good tidings. They called Barnabas Jupiter and Paul Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. They brought oxen and garlands to sacrifice in their honor, but Paul cried out saying, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that you should turn from these vain things unto the living God."

Artists have reproduced the scene. The beautifully groomed oxen are decorated with garlands. The priests are resplendent in their robes and decorations. Paul and Barnabas are central figures. There is in II Timothy an allusion to this time and it is extremely probable that Timothy was standing with the multitudes, a participant in the events.

Envious Jews came, violently opposing Paul and persuaded the people, who stoned Paul and left him supposing that he was dead. His friends cared for him and helped him to escape. Probably Timothy witnessed this scene also, for one may trust a youth to be at hand where unusual excitement is engrossing a community. Being partly Jewish and partly Gentile, he and Lois and Eunice would understand and perhaps partly sympathize with both elements in the community.

Paul visited Lystra four times, and wrote a letter, (Galatians) to Christians of the neighborhood. The next time Paul came to Lystra he found Timothy, a disciple well reported of by the brethren. Paul now took Timothy to go forth with him. Timothy was circumcised, to fulfil a Jewish law which had been omitted because his father was a Greek. Reading between the lines of this very brief statement one must assume many conferences between Paul and Timothy, and his widowed mother and his grandmother. The women must have been sincere and enthusiastic believers in the new faith or they could not have consented to endure the parting from Timothy and their anxiety for his safety in this new and dangerous work.

From this time forward Timothy became Paul's constant attendant. He was ever beside him or carrying on work or messages for him. In modern language we would say that he became Paul's adopted son.

Timothy and Luke probably knew more about Paul's later ministry and last years, than any one else in the world. One or the other of them was with him a great part of the time.

Paul just before his execution wrote II Timothy which he addressed to "Timothy, my beloved child." He writes of unceasing remembrance of Timothy in his supplications, night and day longing to see him, remembering his tears. Continuing Paul pays a tribute to "the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother, Lois, and thy mother Eunice."

After earnest fatherly and pastoral admonitions about Timothy's duties in charge of the great Christian center at Ephesus, Paul adds, "Thou didst follow my persecutions and sufferings at Lystra. Yea and all that would live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But I charge thee in the sight of God, preach the word."

The letter closes with Paul's last personal farewells. "The time of my departure is come. Only Luke is with me. I have fought the good fight. The Lord will deliver me and save me unto his heavenly kingdom. Amen."

When word was received that Paul had been beheaded outside the walls of Rome the grief and fears of Christians everywhere must have been profound. Among those who mourned in very personal bereavement must have been Eunice and Lois. To them belongs the honor of having trained a great helper in establishing the Christian Church.

CONCLUSION

The gospel message taught a new attitude toward women. Luke's record is especially permeated with human sympathy and with an understanding interest in women and children. The teachings of Jesus in regard to adultery, marriage, and divorce were all favorable to women.

Three of the parables are based upon incidents in the lives of women. One was that of the importunate widow whose persistence won a decision from the unjust judge; another was that of the woman who searched diligently until she found the precious lost coin, which was probably a treasured heirloom, such as are worn by oriental women, and prized far above its intrinsic value; and among the last public teachings there was that of the wise and foolish virgins and the warning from the rejection of those having no oil in their lamps.

The gospel brought a new purpose into the lives of women. To minister to the workers, to serve the church, and to pray for its ideals were all ways of expressing woman's spiritual nature.

The gospel dignified the lives of women by giving them a new responsibility. Here was a great opportunity in which they could take an equal share with men. They could live the Christian life and train their children to pass on its teachings. The world is still in need of the service of Christian women.

Many have verified Goethe's saying that "All beginnings are difficult." It is almost impossible now to realize the difficulties of the first one hundred years of Christian faith. The first thirty years included the life and death of Jesus. The last thirty years are obscure as to records but enough has been written to show the Church, after the death of

most of its first great leaders, struggling with false teachings from foes within, and terrifying persecutions from foes without.

Between the Crucifixion and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. there passed forty years of amazing achievement. The Christian Church became established. It was said that Christ's followers were turning the world upside down. In all their efforts and trials they were befriended and supported by women.

In the years of cruel torture and martyrdom of Christians many women were victims. The books of I Peter and the Revelation were written to strengthen people facing martyrdom. Eternal rewards were to be for those who came up out of great tribulation.

A word of tribute should be given to unnamed women martyrs of the early church. They died for their firm belief that Jesus Christ in his teaching of peace and good will among men has given the world the message which shall overcome evil with good, and that He shall reign forever and ever.

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